AN IMPLEMENTATION OF GUIDED READING IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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Lisa J. Polk

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to educators who teach in schools serving a large percentage of students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Anyone looking from the outside in can never understand, and the view from the inside out is difficult to fully explain. Educators working in schools with subpar conditions and with students who face hardships on a daily basis are agents of change for those they serve. You are a hero fighting on the front lines improving the lives of students through the education you provide. May God's favor and blessings rest upon you and resonate through your good works.

ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this mixed methods study was to examine elementary teachers' understanding of guided reading within a first-year implementation. The researcher conducted a survey and employed both a qualitative and quantitative data analysis. The convergent parallel design of this study allowed for a simultaneous analysis of qualitative and quantitative data. The researcher employed a series of correlations to examine the relationships of the variables included in this study. Findings revealed a need to clarify important practices of the guided reading approach. Areas of guided reading in need of support included: texts used, grouping methods, scheduling time for guided reading, and assessments used in guided reading. Information from the analyses was used in a performance evaluation to inform support needs for schools. Guided reading, nestled in the balanced literacy framework, provides differentiated instruction to optimize student growth. As new school accountability measures focus on the growth of all students, guided reading provides an instructional context enabling differentiation to occur. A new to district implementation of guided reading provided the need of a program evaluation to be conducted. The findings of the study informed the program evaluation of teachers' knowledge of guided reading and the areas of guided reading in need of further support.

KEY WORDS: Accountability, Achievement, Assessments, Balanced literacy, Correlations, Differentiation, Elementary, Grouping, Guided reading, Implementation, Mixed methods, Program evaluation, School, Survey.

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and concern of SHSU professors enhanced my writing and wellbeing while attending the graduate school writing events. The guidance of professors through coursework and literacy events at SHSU have provided learning experiences that enabled me to become a more effective literacy leader. Conversations with Dr. Price, navigation of topics with Dr. Gerber, and collaborative literacy leading experiences learned from Dr. Miller have provided in-depth learning opportunities. Dr. Votteler's influence in literacy learning activities have enabled me to provide improvements in literacy instructional practices and recognize how to navigate difficult situations. Her teaching of discourse analysis and questioning has opened my eyes and assisted in more effective decision making.

The tremendous efforts and work of teachers, administrators, and colleagues during this year are incomparable to any other. The relentless efforts of those who are no longer with us and those who remain in the field provide students with the opportunities of academic achievement. I appreciate the positive impact and am recharged by the teachers I have the opportunity to be around and learn from.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Societal demands of information processing and communication require a command of foundational literacy skills. Additionally, foundational reading skills are necessary precursors to academic progress for students. Consequently, academic achievement relies heavily on early foundational language skills (Clay, 1993; Cooper et. al., 2014). Therefore, children need effective beginning steps with appropriate instructional pacing in order to develop foundational reading skills and reach targeted academic growth.

Ultimately, decisions concerning sequencing and pacing of instruction in public schools follow national, state, and district curriculum guidelines. Typically, vertical alignment of skills is arranged by expected grade-level mastery. Although students may or may not reach grade-level expectations, instruction typically continues to follow the vertical alignment design per grade-level. Furthermore, instruction is often delivered to students in a universal manner in an attempt to align with governed curriculum standards (Davis & Willson, 2015; Hoffman et al. 2001; ILA, 2017). Consequently, all students may not have mastered the prerequisite skills needed to advance to the next step in the learning process (Crowe et al., 2009; Ferrer et al., 2015). Nevertheless, educators are expected to continue instruction according to specified mandates regardless of student readiness. Herein lies pivotal decisions that can result in creating, widening, or closing academic achievement gaps (Polikoff & Struthers, 2013; Torgensen et al., 2001).

Contrary to traditional means of a one-size-fits-all approach to meeting targeted goals, practitioners and researchers have recognized the need for teachers to differentiate

instruction for students (Deunk et al., 2018; Tomlinson, 2000, 2017). Moreover, concerning progression in reading skills, a differentiated instructional approach allows for more appropriate pacing for each student (Betts, 1952, 1954; Connor et al., 2011; Rasinski & Padak, 2004; Tomlinson, et al., 2003). Attending to unique readiness of skills and needs of students could perhaps alleviate gaps in reading; whereas holistic methods, not allowing for differentiation, create reading deficits (Watts-Taffe et al., 2012; Sousa & Tomlinson, 2018). Therefore, stakeholders making decisions concerning instructional approaches for reading have an opportunity to propel students to become successful readers as well as advance academically. Logistically, research including program evaluations are appropriate and timely when implementing new instructional approaches (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983a).

An internal and external view of program implementations can yield valuable insight as to the problems with or successes of implementations. Initially modeled in contexts other than school system settings, the four levels of evaluation in Kirkpatrick's model served to evaluate a new implementation of programs in schools (Smidt et al., 2009). The four levels in Kirkpatrick's model include criteria specific to reaction, learning, behavior, and results (Kirkpatrick, 1996). The reaction and learning levels focus on the internal aspects while the behavior and results focus on the external and could occur after the implementation (Praslova, 2010). The desired results of this study included finding teachers' perceptions and knowledge base of guided reading to best inform future professional learning. A program evaluation for the schools included in this study was needed due to a first year implementation of an instructional approach new to

the district. The benefits of a program evaluation could enlighten decision makers for future decisions that have lasting impacts for learners.

Background

Reading comprehension, the cornerstone to academic achievement, is a concern of many stakeholders in education (ESSA, 2015; Slavin et al., 2009). Failure to develop reading skills necessary for comprehension is an impediment to academic progress. In essence, it is necessary for students to learn to read successfully prior to gaining the skills of reading rigorous text to learn which is expected in various content related curriculum (Cooper et al., 2014; Wanzek et al., 2013). Combatting necessary improvements needed in academic achievement, legislative mandates such as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2001) and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015) call for action and accountability to ensure equitable opportunities for all students to have a quality education. Despite well intentions, legislation (NCLB, 2001) alone has not been sufficient for change in progress (Paschall et al., 2018). Based on national assessment results of 2017, in some instances, regression occurred (Bandeira de Mello et al., 2019). Consequently, greater than expected strides are necessary to reach the intended milestones in reading.

Achievement gaps in standardized test scores of elementary aged students are a prevalent concern (Wanzek et al., 2013). Moreover, fourth-grade students in Texas performed significantly lower than the average score for public schools in the United States (NAEP, 2017). Texas was among the lowest of five states in which students performed lower than the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) basic level average score. Sadly, low student achievement levels have persisted nationwide in

comparison years of 1998, 2015, and 2017 (NAEP, 2017). More recent assessment results (2017 and 2019) of fourth and eighth-grade students' reading achievement continue to reveal low averages (NCES, 2019a, 2019b). Even though legislative efforts such as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA, 1965), the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, (NCLB, 2001), and the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA, 2015) seemed promising to secure a quality education for all students, more prevalent occurrences of achievement deficits exist in school districts with a high percentage of students labeled as economically disadvantaged. Factors contributing to achievement deficits associated with a large population of economically disadvantaged students include a lack of resources and materials necessary to enhance academic growth (Bouck, 2004; Gamoran & An, 2016; Morgan, 2012). Other hindrances affecting the lack of progress in students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds include the lack of shelter and food, insufficient parental support, as well as emotional ramifications (David & Merchant, 2015). Consequently, these factors compile to widen achievement gaps in a population of greatest need.

Additionally, a long-standing concern has been the academic gender gap. Historically, boys have yielded lower scores in reading tests when compared to girls (Chudowsky, Chudowsky & Center on Education Policy, 2010; Clark & Burke, 2012; Gurian, 2009; Ma, 2008). Correspondingly, recent national results reveal more females scoring basic level or above in reading than their male counterparts (NAEP, 2017). Perhaps attention to influencing factors found to enhance reading development in boys, such as interest in topics, could yield an increase in skills and scores (Oakhill & Petrides, 2007; Meece et al., 2006; Gurian & Stevens, 2007).

In order to rectify the perpetual academic achievement gaps in populations of concern, a more focused approach to instruction for all students might be considered. As a result of reading achievement and an urgency to close academic achievement gaps, implementing feasible and flexible instructional approaches that allow for feasibility and flexibility could improve academic progress. Instructional practices providing for the unique needs of learners yet simultaneously providing structure required in curriculum pacing are increasingly sought after. Educators should consider using guided reading to meet this need (Burkins & Croft, 2010, 2017; Clay, 1991b, 1993; Fountas & Pinnell, 2017; Hornsby, 2000; Routman, 2000).

Statement of the Problem

Compounding influences yield insufficient progress in reading scores of elementary aged students residing in Texas (NCES, 2019a). Contributing factors to such achievement gaps include low socioeconomic status, lack of instructional resources, and inattentiveness to differentiated instructional approaches (NCES, 2019a, 2019b; TEA, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c). Unrelenting deficiencies in reading skills surface in early years of students' education. Unfortunately, this timeframe is also when basic skills are expected to be solidified in preparation for extended growth. Specifically, third-grade reading scores in rural public-school districts with a high percentage of economically disadvantaged students enrolled are below meets performance on the state assessment (Texas Education Agency (TEA), 2019a). Consequently, an immediate instructional focus is needed to close these recurring academic achievement gaps.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine what teachers understand and do in their efforts to effectively implement guided reading. The findings of this study will inform a program evaluation of the areas in guided reading that teachers need further training and support.

Significance of the Study

Failure to attain developmentally appropriate reading skills in early years not only hinders students' present growth but also increases achievement gaps extending into higher grade-levels (Wanzek et al., 2013). According to Rasinski and Young (2017), "If students do not master the foundational skills and develop into fluent readers, then they will likely continue to struggle in the upper elementary grades" (p. 146). Consequently, the achievement gap in reading will only widen if not alleviated early on. This deficit warrants attention to investigate factors that might alleviate this detrimental trend. A program evaluation of curriculum and instruction is necessary to determine influential factors. The implementation of guided reading as defined and explained throughout this literature review, will be investigated to determine teachers' instructional practices related to guided reading in their first year of implementation. The findings of this study could impact practice, policy, and research to the implementation of guided reading.

In my program evaluation, I can investigate the fidelity of implementing instructional practices such as guided reading used in literacy programs and determine the impact on academic growth of students. To investigate factors that might close academic achievement gaps and impact student growth, more immediate measures are needed as opposed to relying exclusively on end of year state assessments. Summative assessments

such as standardized end-of-year exams, district level benchmarks, or curriculum-based assessments lack the capability to identify specific reading achievement gaps and instructional needs of each student (Betts, 1952; ILA, 2017). Unfortunately, high stakes stringent accountability measures are based on statewide assessments and push test-preparation instructional practices into the classroom (Davis & Willson, 2015; ILA, 2017). Combined with whole group classroom settings, test driven practices take the place of effective research-based instruction which intensifies the recurring achievement gaps (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2018). Nevertheless, common assessments are continuously referenced when educators make instructional decisions. Although standardized testing is an inevitable requirement in public education, more applicable measures are available especially when considering Texas' new A-F accountability system's focus on growth measures of all students (ESSA, 2015). Consequently, for educators to make decisions that will produce growth for students as well as meet growth goals at the campus and school level, running/reading records enabling accurate measures of students' development of specific reading skills are needed.

The findings from this study might inform educators and stakeholders about the increased effectiveness of student-centered assessments that inform teachers of how to meet students' developmental targets as opposed to state mandated assessments measuring end-of-year projections on grade-level standards. Tomlinson and McTighe (2006) support the regular use of formative assessments to determine how proficient or deficient students are in development of skills. Contrary to administering a common assessment given to all students, guided reading includes assessments relevant to progress monitoring the development of individual students' reading skills.

During the small group reading session, systematic measurements of students' behaviors and actions can be recorded. Reading records will allow teachers to analyze the reading behaviors of individual students and develop an appropriate plan of instruction designed specifically for the student being observed. Observations focusing on a child's behavior while reading can yield valuable information concerning instruction in a response to the reader's needs (Barone et al., 2019; Betts, 1952, 1954; Clay, 2019; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Situated in a small group learning context, the guided reading approach provides ample opportunities to observe and record students' reading behaviors associated with multiple cuing systems. Tracey & Morrow (2017) explain, "A central component of the psycholinguistic theory of reading is that readers rely on language cueing systems to help them rapidly read text" (p.65). Supported by psycholinguistic theory, syntactic, semantic, and graphophonic cues are observed of the reader and miscues are recorded enabling the teacher to analyze strengths and weaknesses of students' reading skills. Goodman (1967) explains how the reader simultaneously utilizes graphic input, syntactic, and semantic information, and "He predicts and anticipates on the basis of this information, sampling from the print just enough to confirm his guess of what's coming, to cue more semantic and syntactic information" (p.131). Goodman (1967) coined the term "miscues" as the reader's actions taken that deviate from the text and attaches the term with a positive connotation of miscues as "windows" into a reader's mind (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). The systematic measurements of students taken during the reading process helps identify the gaps in learning and can inform next steps of instruction.

As teachers are empowered to identify academic deficiencies and reading challenges while students are closely monitored, more direct measures of growth also become evident. The feasibility of monitoring student growth within the classroom setting, allows for instructional adjustments tailored for students' needs to be made in a timely manner. Furthermore, the intricate details involved in assessing reading skills requires observing and recording a student's actions during the reading process (Clay, 1991a; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Behaviors such as accurate word recognition, fluency, and comprehension are observable while students navigate through the reading process (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017; Young & Rasinski, 2017). Reading and/or running records of observable actions during the reading process allows for an accurate measure of skills exhibited by a student (Clay, 1991a, 2017; Fountas & Pinnell, 2017; Routman, 2000). Problem solving strategies used during reading are demonstrated by students which inform teachers of their strengths and weaknesses. Guided reading is an instructional approach designed and suited for opportunities to observe and assist students with the development of specific reading skills. During guided reading, teachers are able to attend to the challenges students face while reading and assist students with problem-solving strategies related to the readers' needs (Lipp & Helfrich, 2016; Pinnell, 1993; Routman, 2000; Young & Raskinski, 2017). Expedient teacher response assists and enables the reader to hurdle the immediate challenges faced during the process of reading.

The purpose of guided reading is to provide an instructional method where students develop reading strategies needed to become successful, independent readers (Clay, 1991a; Fountas & Pinnell, 2017; Opitz & Ford, 2001; Pinnell, 1993; Routman, 2000; Young, 2019). Following the initial grouping in the guided reading approach,

dynamic grouping occurs which allows teachers to maneuver students according to development and progress in skills. Contrary to a whole class setting, where students are more remotely situated from the teacher and likely overlooked, guided reading allows the teacher to consistently work with students in small groups where reading behaviors and skills are closely observed and systematically assessed. With this information, differentiation can be developed and implemented as the needs and levels of students are considered while teachers make decisions on small group placement (Betts, 1952, 1954, 1973). Furthermore, responsive teaching occurs, allowing teachers to differentiate according to students' instructional needs (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017; Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006). Responsive teaching contrasts the one-size-fits-all approach and can positively impact current local curriculum and instructional practices.

Through this research, I aspire to gain knowledge of teachers' instructional practices related to guided reading and professional development needed to more effectively implement this instructional approach. Because of the scarcity of empirical research conducted on guided reading, information gathered from data in this study could also be used to impact decisions on educational policy. Recent legislation coordinated with new accountability measures call for changes in reading instruction (TEA, n.d., 2019a, 2019d). Specifically in Texas, House Bill 3 requires principals and teachers of students in kindergarten through third-grade to go through reading academies that include evidence-based practices including the science of teaching reading (TEA, 2019a, 2019d). Guided reading, nestled in a balanced literacy framework, provides the structure enabling the application of evidence-based practices. Guided reading provides a systematic approach to monitor student progress in reading skills. Coupled with growth requirements

in the A-F accountability system, guided reading, when implemented with fidelity, allows teachers to clearly monitor students' growth in reading skills.

Due to the lack of research conducted on guided reading, this study could possibly impact other school districts with similar programs and help guide that implementation. Schools relying solely on summative assessments and focusing on passing rates, as opposed to optimal growth for all students, generalize instruction accordingly and overlook the opportunity of maximum growth for all students. With the program evaluation in this study, I examined a change in instructional practices of generalizing instruction to incorporating a focus on individual student growth.

This study serves as a possible framework with other performance evaluations of schools with similar practices. Opportunities to contribute knowledge of possible implications of guided reading on populations of economically disadvantaged students in addition to the longstanding gender gap in reading achievement are also present in this study. Ultimately, this study aims to inform educational stakeholders of effective classroom implications that could possibly close and alleviate gaps, enhance academic achievement, and serve as a performance evaluation framework.

Research Questions

This study is framed as a program evaluation that focused on the efficacy of the implementation of guided reading in one school district in its first year of implementation of this instructional practice. To ascertain the degree to which teachers were successfully implementing guided reading, this researcher conducted a needs assessment to determine the degree to which teachers were effectively implementing guided reading and to ascertain the types of professional development teachers might need to more effectively

use guided reading in their classrooms. The following topics were investigated in relation to teachers' implementation of guided reading: purposes of guided reading, grouping techniques, texts, planning for instruction, and assessment. This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of teachers on the implementation of guided reading?
2. In what areas of guided reading do teachers need further training and support?

Definition of Key Terms

Balanced literacy approach: A balanced literacy framework includes a focus of instruction on both skill and meaning components of literacy, achieving a balance of literacy learning experiences for learners. Balanced literacy instructional practices frequently include interactive read alouds, shared reading, interactive writing, mini-lessons, guided reading, and independent reading and writing (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Bingham & Hall-Kenyon, 2013). A balanced literacy approach employs a gradual release of responsibility from teacher led instruction to independent student learning (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983b).

Differentiation: According to Tomlinson and Eidson, (2003), "differentiated instruction refers to as systematic approach to planning curriculum and instruction for academically diverse learners" (p. 3). The unique educational needs and preferences of students are considered to optimize learning experiences for all students. Differentiation takes content, process, and product into consideration throughout the learning process (Tomlinson, 2001; Tomlinson & Eidson, 2003).

Economically Disadvantaged: For my dissertation purposes, low socioeconomic and economically disadvantaged are interchangeable. Students from low-income families are considered economically disadvantaged. School districts serving a high concentration of students from low income homes are often referred to as a Title I school district. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) deems economically disadvantaged status with eligibility for free or reduced-priced meals under the National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Program as well as other economic disadvantages such as a family's income at or below the official federal poverty line (TEA, 2019b).

Guided Reading: Guided reading is a differentiated approach to reading where students are grouped by reading level and literacy learning needs. Fountas & Pinnell (2017) explain, "Guided reading is a small-group instructional context in which a teacher supports each reader's development of systems of strategic action for processing new texts at increasingly challenging levels of difficulty" (p. 12). The ultimate goal of guided reading is for students to develop and use strategies to read independently (Young, 2019). Observations of students reading during guided reading enable teachers to select texts, develop goals, and regroup as needed (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, 2017).

Reading Record: Teachers use a copy of a text to record notes on students' reading behaviors during the process of reading the text. Fountas & Pinnell (2018) state, "A reading record is a systematic tool used to code, score, and analyze a student's precise reading behaviors. The reading record provides a standardized system to gain an objective assessment of the students' reading without your teaching support" (p. 97).

Running Record: Fountas & Pinnell (2017) state, "Developed by Marie Clay (Heinemann 2000) a running record is a standardized process for coding, scoring, and

analyzing a student's precise reading behaviors" (p. 257). Teachers use a blank page or template to record and identify strategic reading behaviors while students orally read a text. Running records are used to analyze students' strengths and instructional needs (Barone et al., 2019).

Schema: Schema involves readers thinking and connecting their previous knowledge and experiences while reading and interacting with a text. Readers bring to the text what they already know during the process of making meaning (Anderson & Pearson, 1984; Keene & Zimmermann, 2007; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983b). According to Tracey and Marrow (2017), "Schema Theory states that readers must connect the material that they are reading with background knowledge on the topic that already exists in their minds" (p. 238).

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD): According to Vygotsky (1978), "It is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86).

Delimitations

The delimitations of this study included the population and school context to be studied. The population in the study included elementary teachers who were new to the guided reading approach. The selected elementary campuses were Title I public schools in the southwestern region of the United States where most students were from low income families.

Organization of the Study

The researcher organizes this dissertation into five sections in addition to references and appendices. Following the introduction, Chapter Two provides a review of relevant literature. Chapter Three describes the methods used to implement the study. Chapter Four will then include results and findings. Chapter Five presents a discussion of the results and limitations of the study, implications pertaining to practice and policy, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

Successful reading requires the reader to activate a multifaceted skill set in order to gain meaning from texts. Scarborough (2001) explains, “Skilled readers are able to derive meaning from printed text accurately and efficiently” (p. 97). The goal and purpose of reading is to comprehend texts, and therefore, effective instructional approaches continue to be a focus for helping students to be successful. Historically, the development of reading comprehension skills has captivated the attention of educational stakeholders and continues to be a dominate focus in educational policy (ESSA, 2015; NCLB, 2001; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000; TEA, 2019a, 2019d). As the need for improvement in reading achievement resurfaces, the pursuit of effective instructional approaches continues.

Theoretical Framework

In order for students to make progress in reading achievement, guidance by a teacher who is knowledgeable in strategies to develop reading skills is needed. Social constructivism, Vygotsky’s theory of learning, supports the guided reading instructional approach and the systems of strategic actions readers employ (Vygotsky, 1978). Specifically, the social context of guided reading instruction is evident whereas students are situated within a small group participating in a discussion with peers of similar instructional needs and level and teacher guidance. Moreover, the language learning process in the guided reading context involves the four major tenets in social constructivism. One tenant, semiotic mediation, also referred to as sign systems, is evident in guided reading as students use language as a tool to think and respond in the

learning process. Discussions occur before reading as the teacher elicits prior knowledge about the text. Through the interactions with others during the learning process, concept development, the tenet in the learning process occurs (Unrau & Alvermann, 2013). The interactions and conversations during and after the reading build on knowledge and comprehension resulting in an increase in competence. In correspondence to interactions in small groups, one of Vygotsky's most prominent tenets, the zone of proximal development (ZPD), refers to a student's highest attainable level of learning that can be achieved with the support of a knowledgeable other (Vygotsky, 1978). Specific to guided reading, teachers attune to students' ZPD and are better able to select texts used in guided reading lessons. The guided reading context also provides multiple opportunities to raise students' ZPD furthering knowledge during discussions with the teacher and peers. Ultimately, skills students develop with assistance at current states can be performed independently. As students develop independence in skills, internalization, another important tenet in Vygotsky's theory of learning, enables the student to internalize the previously assisted task to the point of performing what was learned with ease. Similar to the process of independence gained as explained in the gradual release model, the teacher scaffolds the strategic skills needed for students to comprehend texts (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983a; Tracey & Morrow, 2017; Young, 2019). As skill development improves, reading acquisition occurs, and students begin to perform the acquired skills automatically with ease. Important to reading, automaticity enables students' cognition to comprehend more challenging texts. The ultimate goal of guided reading is to assist students with skills necessary to independently read increasingly challenging texts. Guided reading provides the support for students to internalize reading strategies and

skills needed to independently read a variety of texts. The scaffolding of reading skills with the guidance from a knowledgeable other provides opportunities of growth for all students. The implementation of guided reading as an instructional approach is theoretically supported by Vygotsky's social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978).

Initially, to meet the parameter in the literature review, the criteria of the selection of research included guided reading and gains or increase related to reading achievement. There, I selected three to review. The search was then limited to research and added empirical as well in the need of quality research on the methodology of guided reading. Therefore, several empirical articles were chosen for the reference chasing.

Foundational Reading Skills

The foundation of reading and writing skills began with the earliest known forms of communication including logographic, cuneiform, the Phoenician and Egyptian alphabets with revisions made later by the Greeks to include consonants and vowels to the Phoenician alphabet (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). According to Smith (2002), the historical influences of reading instruction included: religious influence, emphasizing oral reading and memorization; German-Pestalozzian, emphasizing word method; cultural assets, valuing history and literature in schools; practical aspects, focusing on silent reading habits, rate, and comprehension; stimulation of thinking, using a culmination of methods and materials for reading instruction (Gray, 1936; Smith, 2002).

The National Reading Panel (NRP, 2000), more recently defines foundational reading skills as effective techniques for teaching children to read including: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, oral reading, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies. Foundational reading skills are addressed simultaneously during guided reading. The

ultimate goal of guided reading is for the individual to be able to independently comprehend the text and requires the use of strategic actions. Fountas and Pinnell (2017) state, “Strategies are cognitive operations that take place in the brain” (p. 362). Systems of strategic actions for reading include thinking within, beyond, and about the text. Thinking within the text places the reader in the driver’s seat as they search for and use information, monitor and self-correct, solve words, maintain fluency, adjust, and summarize as they read. Readers think about the text by critiquing and analyzing the text taking special notice of text structure and author’s craft. Actions taken by readers when thinking beyond the text might include inferring, synthesizing, predicting, and making connections. Simultaneously orchestrated, these systems are used by the reader to become proficient and successful with the actions required in reading. These actions work together evolving and enabling the reader to discern what is being read (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017). Foundational reading skills are essential in the success of attaining meaning from texts. Therefore, foundational reading skills are necessary tools for helping readers to establish a greater understanding for what is being read.

The importance of early establishment of foundational reading skills creates the need to provide a successful learning environment. Small group instruction is the ideal form of instructional arrangement for supporting students and monitoring their progress. More specifically, small group instruction can help to aid student development through continued assessment of their foundational reading skills (Betts, 1952, 1954; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Initial assessments, as well as ongoing observations of students’ reading in a small group format, allow for responsive teaching to occur. Moreover, Marie Clay (2019) emphasized the importance of an early monitoring and systematic observation of a

child's behaviors while reading and interacting with texts. Noticing a child's concepts about print, while observing a child's attempts to link oral language and reading, can inform teachers of instructional goals for students (Clay, 1993). Additionally, detecting deficiencies early on can provide opportunities for successful development of foundational reading skills. When students' inaccurate attempts at reading are overlooked, gaps in learning occur placing the child off track in reading development. Therefore, close systematic observations in a student's first year of learning is imperative to setting them off to a successful course in reading achievement (Clay, 2019).

Additionally, The National Reading Panel (NRP, 2000) reported the combination of techniques for teaching children to read include: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency. Contrary to some interpretations, the foundational reading skills operating in isolation do not produce comprehension for readers (Allington, 1983a, 1983b). Additionally, NRP promoted an integrated and balanced approach to reading instruction. According to Cowan (2003):

> A balanced reading approach is research-based, assessment-based, comprehensive, integrated, and dynamic, in that it empowers teachers and specialists to respond to the individual assessed literacy needs of children as they relate to their appropriate instructional and developmental levels of decoding, vocabulary, reading comprehension, motivation, understanding, and joy (p. 10).

Furthermore, skills practiced in isolation limit the learning to only attaining the particular skill in focus. Skills practiced in seclusion of one another do not produce the goal of comprehending the intended meaning of the text (Allington, 1983a, 1983b). However, in order for the reading process to occur, each foundational reading skill works

simultaneously in a fluent manner enabling readers to comprehend. Scarborough (2001) explains the many component skills or major strands required in reading acquisition "fluidly coordinate" and "are woven together during the course of becoming a skilled reader" (p. 97). Therefore, the mechanics and intricate details required of the reading process cannot exclusively rely on one or all tools of reading skills. Her research situates foundational reading skills into strands of language comprehension and word recognition. Scarborough (2001) illustrates skilled reading as "fluent execution and coordination of increasingly strategic text comprehension" (p. 98). Essentially, it is the fluid coordination of reading skills that enable the reader to comprehend a text.

Moreover, fluency is paramount to successful comprehension (Rasinski, 2014; Therrien, 2004; Young et al., 2015). Furthermore, Rasinski (2014) explains, "Reading fluency is made up of two distinct components at two ends of the reading spectrum – automaticity in word recognition and expression in oral reading that reflects the meaning of the text" (p. 4). Simultaneously, prosody, the appropriate expression and phrasing reflecting the true meaning of the text, enhances a reader's comprehension (Schreiber, 1980; Young & Rasinski, 2009, 2017). Prosody is an important component in the fluent process of reading as the reader uses voice inflections, adding expression and enhancing the meaning of the text. Adding expression while reading allows the reader to alter the tone, pitch, volume, and pace, which brings the text to life, adds excitement, and demonstrates the true meaning of the text. As supported by LaBerge and Samuel's automatic information-processing model, comprehension cannot occur without fluency, as readers would then spend a great deal of time focusing solely on word calling (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974). Expended energy on segmented word calling inhibits

comprehension and can frustrate readers when the goal is to gain understanding of a text; whereas, reading with fluency provides an efficient means of processing for comprehension to occur with ease. Furthermore, Young et al. (2015) state, “Recognizing words automatically and effortlessly allows readers to focus on higher-order processes such as comprehension” (p. 1). Overall, fluency enables readers to gain more knowledge in an efficient and positive experience which in turn increases comprehension.

Background of Guided Reading

Ensuring that students make progress and develop the skills to become successful readers is a significant goal of educators and students as they enter school. However, some students experience difficulties, lags, or deficits in foundational skills while learning to read. Researcher, Marie Clay, recognized the need for early identification of gaps in students’ reading development. The Observation Survey was developed by Clay to closely observe and uncover a child’s weakness that might be the cause of a lag in development in language skills (Clay, 2019). Utilizing close systematic observations of students and individualized tutoring, Clay’s Reading Recovery Program has proven to be a successful system to intervene with gaps in early readers’ development of skills (Clay, 1993). Clay (1991b) implores, “An earlier offer of effective help to the child might reduce the magnitude of the reading problems in later schooling” (p. 13). Therefore, systematic observations utilized with early individualized interventions enables teachers to help students overcome weaknesses in reading skills and place them back on pace with development.

After its implementation, Reading Recovery continued to be investigated as to the effectiveness of the instructional strategies. More specifically, the effectiveness of the

instructional strategies was determined by gains in the reading outcomes of students (Pinnell, 1993). The program's success created a shift in reading instruction from large to small group arrangements. Consequently, guided reading emerged as an effective focus in reading instruction (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). It was determined that the primary years are a critical point in time to make positive changes for students who struggle in reading; effective and meaningful interventions must be employed to enable students to read independently and comprehend increasingly rigorous text (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Contrary to a prescriptive program, guided reading focuses on the individual child allowing the teacher to respond to students' individual needs (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). A differentiated approach to learning allows instruction to focus on specific areas of growth and considers the needs of each student.

Guided reading is a differentiated approach to reading instruction considering the unique needs of learners. Puzio et al. (2015) stated, "Differentiation occurs when the teacher, guided by assessment data, proactively adapts their instruction or curriculum for individuals or groups" (p. 136). Student readiness, learning style, and interest are a few areas to consider when aiming to provide successful learning experiences for all students. Areas such as content, interest, and process of learning are key components when designing instruction. A differentiated approach to reading instruction is multifaceted. Teachers might consider using a variety of literacy practices including guided reading (Betts, 1952, 1973; Puzio et al., 2015). Ultimately, guided reading sets the stage and empowers students to gain the strategies needed to read independently (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017; Routman, 2000; Young, 2019). Students attaining a level of independence

with skills and strategies learned during instruction and practiced with the teacher, are able to reach toward new goals and advanced levels of application.

Additionally, students continue to become efficient and advance in reading achievement as they encounter increasingly challenging texts. The increase in rigor requires more advanced responses and strategic actions are necessary to comprehend text. As readers face the demands of more challenging text, they begin to utilize a system of strategic actions of thinking within, beyond, and about the text (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006). During the action of thinking beyond the text, students make connections and activate schema for successful comprehension to occur (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983a, 1983b). However, the increase of strategies for the student also requires instructional shifts to occur for teachers. Therefore, guided reading, nestled in a balanced literacy framework, is an effective instructional approach allowing students to reach optimal gains in reading achievement.

Instructional environments and schedules tailored for differentiation include a time for small group learning. Guided reading takes place in a small group setting where the teacher interacts with four to five students of similar level and needs (Lyons & Thompson, 2012). The teacher is able to design and concentrate instruction on students' specific goals and needs. Guided reading is not a program. Guided reading is a component of the balanced literacy framework and can feasibly occur in a structured timeframe such as in a reading/writing workshop model. Along with guided reading, other balanced literacy components employed on a regular basis include interactive read alouds, shared reading, mini-lessons, and independent reading. Within the structured timeframe for guided reading, teachers are able to work with students of similar reading

level and need while other students are engaged in independent reading practice as well as other effective literacy activities.

Guided reading is supported by constructivism and cognitive processing theories. Two predominant viewpoints of researchers in literacy are studying the environment in which a child learns as well as behaviors exhibited by the child while reading (Dewey, 1916; Piaget & Inhelder, 1966/1969). Along with a constructivist viewpoint, Piaget, a renowned psychologist, also focused on cognitive development identifying four factors: biological maturation, activity, social experiences, and equilibration which is a search for cognitive balance during occasions of imbalance. All four factors affect an individual's thinking as they grow; however, equilibration is of specific interest in reading as it is a search for cognitive balance during a state of imbalance. Piaget's research resulted in creating the theory of cognitive development describing the quality of children's thinking as it progresses over time (Tracey & Marrow, 2017). Important to educators, Piaget identified four stages of cognitive development: (a) sensorimotor period, (b) preoperational period, (c) concrete operational period, and (d) formal operational period. These four stages provide a framework for understanding a child's level of thinking at different ages as they develop. From birth to two years, during the sensorimotor period, a child's thinking is based on their sensory interactions and explorations. In the preoperational period, from two to seven years of age, a child begins to make sense of their world with words and experiences rapid language development. During the concrete operational period, from seven to eleven years of age, it is important for a child to have the opportunity of using concrete objects to develop abstract thinking. The formal operational period, from eleven years of age into adulthood, a child uses language in an

abstract way. Piaget's theory of cognitive development is important for educators to consider as it provides expectations of readiness for the various tasks involved in reading and a clear map of ways children will likely think as they develop (Tracey & Marrow, 2017).

Cognitive processing and development theories play a major role in instructional decisions made concerning a child's reading skills and development. Guided reading is an instructional approach allowing for close monitoring of students' development and attending to specific learning needs. Teachers can prepare students for comprehension by developing guided reading lessons in terms of before, during, and after reading phases. The phases provide optimal times for building schema by activating students' prior knowledge and connecting or reinforcing new knowledge. The during reading phase also opens the opportunity for teachers to scaffold metacognitive instruction that improves students' abilities to independently read increasingly challenging texts. The after reading phase continues to build and reinforce comprehension by thinking and responding to questions in small group discussions.

The guided reading approach is theoretically stable as the learning environment places the reader central for observing reading behaviors. During the reading process, cognitive actions and patterns the reader takes can be observed. Philip Gough's information-processing model later became known as the simple view system of information intake, recognizing patterns, decoding, and ending with comprehension (Gough as cited in Unrau & Alvermann, 2013). In essence, reading comprehension results from decoding skills and language comprehension.

Coinciding with Gough's information-processing model, the automatic information-processing model (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974) emerged further explaining cognitive processes occurring when a child reads. Similarly, visual memory begins at the onset of graphic input from a text. Information continues to be processed via phonological, episodic, and semantic memories along with attention of the reader (Unrau & Alvermann, 2013). Recursively, within the context of occurrence, sound attaching to visual images merging with meaning becomes stored as knowledge. As the reader pays attention while interacting with the text, the behaviors of the reader are observed by the teacher. External attention is observed by watching the physical actions taking place which is also telling of the internal attention happening inside the reader's mind. As readers become more automatic with the reading process, less cognitive energy is needed for the decoding task enabling a predominate focus on comprehension. Contrary to a productive process, when automaticity is hindered by a deficit, an interruption occurs and a reader loses attention to meaning (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). Gough and Tunmer, (1986) share a, "reading disability could result in three different ways: from an inability to decode, an inability to comprehend, or both" (p. 7). Undetected deficits widen gaps in learning which can occur when students' learning environment consistently consists of whole class design. Conversely, in the guided reading approach, the teacher is able to more readily detect deficits and support students in ways that can close gaps and promote growth in reading achievement. The guided reading approach connects in theory with the cognitive processes required of reading and allows teachers to facilitate an effective learning environment, observe readers' behaviors while reading, and prompt actions that lead students to become successful, independent readers.

Research of Guided Reading

Shifts in literacy instructional practices have often resulted from changes in educational policy. A domino effect, beginning with a decline in test scores, initiates with a concern and urgency from all stakeholders. Magnified attention on subpar performances call for an evaluation of instruction, programs, and policy. Combined effects of policy change and decline in reading scores have been a dual catalyst for searching for effective solutions to remedy the possible causes of poor reading performance (NAEP, 2017). Recent policy shifts focusing on growth measures incites the search for instructional practices proven to be effective in improving the reading performance of all students. Guided reading is one instructional approach designed to decipher reading deficits and provide immediate assistance in improvement and growth of students' reading skills and behaviors.

Although guided reading is widely used and logically designed to increase reading achievement, a low number of quantitative empirical studies exist on this approach. The urgency to find and implement research based instructional practices designed to improve students' reading achievement drives the search for existing research on guided reading. Most research on guided reading includes beneficial applications for practitioners in search of an effective means to close reading achievement gaps. Research finding guided reading to be equivalent or ineffective in comparison to other approaches are prone to include descriptions of methods contrary to the guided reading framework as designed by experts (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996) or other limitations concerning the implementation within studies (Bruce, 2010; Tobin & Calhoon, 2009). One effective discovery of a guided reading study aimed to determine the effects of implementation of

an early intervention literacy program. The intervention program included thirty minutes of daily targeted practice on foundational and comprehension skills for a period of twelve weeks. Students in grades one to four needing targeted skills instruction were included in this study. The study took place in two schools of similar demographics and size in suburban New York. In the experimental group, seventy-one students from one school received targeted intervention in addition to guided reading instruction while the control group included seventy-two students from the other school who only received guided reading instruction in the classroom. Assessments from the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA2) (Beaver, 2006) and the Developmental Spelling Assessment (DSA) (Ganske 1999) were used to inform instruction. The intervention in the experimental group included instruction utilizing Fountas & Pinnell's Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) (Pinnell & Fountas, 1998) and the foundational reading skills Orton-Gillingham program (Ritchey & Goeke, 2006). As measured by the mid-year and end-of-year DRA2, students in both groups improved in reading comprehension with targeted experimental group making a greater amount of growth, as the beginning mean of 13.21 ended with a mean of 19.32. The control group began with a mean of 6.1 and ended with a mean of 19.4. Both groups improved as shown by the F-ratio for time ($F(1, 141) = 1338.73$, $p < .001$), yet the targeted group improved by a greater mean of 6.11 than the control group's average mean of 2.45. Guided reading coupled with targeted interventions, showed a significant growth in reading comprehension as compared to other students in need of intervention who only received guided reading instruction in the classroom. The implications of this study suggests providing instruction beyond the classroom for primary grades to minimize gaps in foundational reading skills (Anderson, 2016). In

essence, students needing targeted reading intervention will benefit from guided reading instruction inside the classroom supplemented with an additional time of intervention.

Additional favorable results of implementation of guided reading were found in a quasi-experimental study with a nonequivalent control-group. This study examined the impact of guided reading instruction on elementary students' ability to read with accuracy and fluency. One of the two southeastern public schools in the United States included in the study implemented guided reading instruction and the other did not. Two groups of thirty-five to fifty students in fourth and fifth grades included English language learner (ELL) students with varied socio-economic status of high, medium, and low as well as free and reduced lunch subsidies. A DRA2 measurement to calculate fluency and accuracy was taken in January and May. Words per minute (WPM) and accuracy were measured in the pretest and posttest of fifty-seven fourth-grade students in the experimental group. The entire sample of 108 students included twenty-eight females in the experimental group while the control group contained twenty-seven males and twenty-five females. An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to determine the impact on students' fluency when guided reading instruction is employed between the experimental group and control group. Students in the experimental group received guided reading instruction two to three times per week. Results indicated a statistical significance occurring in the experimental group with greater gains in fluency than in the control group, $F(1, 104) = 12.27$, $MSE = 8262.18$, $p < .01$. Although students benefited from guided reading instruction, an ANCOVA was used to measure the relationship between guided reading and the accuracy of words students read per minute. The results were not significant ($F(1, 107) = 2.09$, $p = .15$). Implications of this study support the

implementation of guided reading when considering student growth in fluency and word accuracy as teachers are able to closely monitor students' progress and specific needs during guided reading instruction (Teets, 2017).

Unlike the previous studies mentioned, research including 205 children from six primary schools in Hong Kong aimed to improve reading comprehension of young English second language learners (ESL). To control for gender and for reading proficiency, stratified random sampling occurred to place students in one of three groups. The guided reading group included seventy children while sixty-eight students participated in the control group. An e-book alternative treatment group of sixty-seven students read the same books as the guided reading treatment group; however, no teacher instruction was given to the students in the alternative treatment group. The eight-week study included thirty-five-minute weekly sessions in addition to their normal English class instruction. The Neale Analysis of Reading Ability (NARA II) was used to assess students reading accuracy and reading comprehension in the pretest and posttest. A repeated measures ANOVA revealed a significant group x time interaction between the guided reading group vs. control group ($F(1, 136) = 11.65$, $p < .05$) indicating a significant difference in their rate of improvement in reading comprehension over time. Contrary to the Fountas and Pinnell (1996) framework of guided reading approach of whisper or silent reading, children in this study read a section of the story aloud while the peers and teacher listened. In contrast to other research on guided reading instruction, this study included specific comprehension monitoring strategies as found in reciprocal teaching (Palincsar & Brown, 1984) of predicting, questioning, summarizing, and clarifying in the guided reading group (Nayak & Sylva, 2013).

Researchers, Wapole et al. (2017), conducted a quasi-experimental pre-post design study to determine if a full-year comprehensive school reform (CSR) program would be feasible in a regular educational setting and if students would demonstrate more growth in fluency and comprehension. Three elementary schools located in a South Atlantic state served as the treatment group and received the ninety minutes daily CSR program consisting of shared reading, interactive read alouds, and differentiated small group instruction tailored to students' reading instructional needs. The comparison group consisting of four elementary schools used a tiered model with participants receiving whole class reading instruction in Tier 1, small-group differentiated instruction for Tier 2, and intensive interventions at Tier 3. All students in the comparison group were also engaged in guided reading grouped by reading achievement and needs. The treatment group consisted of thirty teachers and 594 students; whereas the comparison group included thirty-eight teachers and 507 students. Eighty-seven percent of students in the treatment school district and seventy-seven percent of the students in the comparison district qualified for lunch subsidies. Both groups at the beginning of the study had equivalent performance in reading fluency and comprehension at grades three, four, and five. Three different 3(time) x 2(group) repeated-measures ANOVAs were conducted. The treatment group significantly outperformed the comparison group for reading fluency in grades three ($p < .01$) and five ($p < .05$), as well as reading comprehension in grade three ($p < 05$), grade four ($p < .05$), and grade five ($p < .05$). Implications of this study support the CSR as feasible to implement in regular school settings serving students living in poverty who are weak at the beginning of the year in reading fluency and comprehension. Researchers only knew of the teachers' intentions of implementing the

instructional approaches in both the treatment and comparison groups, so fidelity of both programs is a limitation of this study (Wapole et al., 2017).

The majority of studies conducted on guided reading included targeted intervention in addition to guided reading for participants who were in need of intentional instruction or identified as at risk (Anderson, 2016; Bruce, 2010; Denton et al., 2014; Nayak & Sylva, 2013; Teets, 2017; Wapole et al., 2017). Declines in nationwide reading scores incites interest for instructional approaches effective for preventing a widespread of reading deficits for all students. In a dissertation research, Gregory (2018) conducted a quasi-experimental quantitative year-long study to determine how guided reading impacted literacy levels, reading engagement, oral reading fluency, and reading comprehension of 352 students from twenty classrooms in grades three and four at a rural southeast Missouri elementary school. Three separate analysis of a paired *t*-test of pre-test and post-test on STAR and DRA2 assessments determined the impact of guided reading on student instructional reading levels, oral reading fluency, and student reading engagement. A paired *t*-test of pre-test and post-test data were analyzed from the STAR assessment to determine if guided reading significantly impacted students' reading comprehension. The pre-tests were administered in August and September of 2016 providing an achievement measure prior to implementation of guided reading instruction, and the post-tests followed in May of 2016. Results from the DRA2 pre-test ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 1.52$) and post-test ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 1.60$) conditions; $t(351) = 18.34$, $p < .01$ suggested guided reading to have a significant impact on student literacy achievement levels in grades three and four. An additional paired *t*-test found a significant difference in the scores of the pre-test ($M = 61.46$, $SD = 11.32$) and post-test ($M = 66.29$, $SD = 7.87$)

conditions; $t(352) = 20.38$, $p < .01$ indicated a significant impact of guided reading instruction on oral reading fluency for students in grades three and four. Students' DRA2 scores were also used to conduct a paired *t*-test and found there was a significant difference in scores on the pre-test ($M = 61.23$, $SD = 11.31$) and post-test ($M = 65.86$, $SD = 7.84$) conditions; $t(352) = 15.44$, $p < .01$ suggesting guided reading having a significant impact on third and fourth-graders' reading comprehension. Implications from this study could inform teachers of the impact of guided reading on overall growth of student literacy measures when instruction is tailored to specific needs of students and implemented with fidelity (Gregory, 2018).

Young (2019) conducted a yearlong quasi-experimental study utilizing a pre/posttest design. A nonprobability sample of seventy-nine students from six different second-grade classrooms in a Title I school located in the southern United States were included in the study. The demographics of the elementary school included 63% Hispanic, 20% White, 13% Black, and 3% were two or more races. Of the seventy-nine students in this study, 43% were English language learners and 77% of students participated in free/reduced lunch program. Demographics were similar in both the treatment group of forty-one students and the comparison group of thirty-eight students. Pretest and posttest DRA2 scores were used to determine the effects of guided reading. Groups were assumed to have equal variances from a repeated measures ANOVA analysis, $F(1, 77) = 1.08$, $p = .301$. Within-group covariance matrices were equal as indicated by Box's M significant value > .001 ($p = .012$). No statistically significant differences existed between the two groups on the basis of pretest measures. Although both treatment and comparison groups received guided reading instruction throughout the

year, students in the treatment group received more individualized and frequent guided reading instruction. Students in the treatment group received seventy-five minutes a week of guided reading instruction. A year's total for teacher instruction in the treatment group equaled 13,500 minutes, whereas the teacher in the comparison group conducted approximately 5,400 minutes of guided reading. Results revealed a great effect of guided reading on the comparison group (d = 1.34), however a greater effect (d = 3.66) in the treatment group occurred with the magnitude of the effect reaching 2.73 times larger than the mean difference effect size in the comparison group. Implications of this study support a positive effect on students' reading ability when an increased amount of time is spent in guided reading. Quantitative empirical findings from this study support the recommendation that students, regardless of level, be met with as frequently as possible (Young, 2019). The information provided in existing research in guided reading is beneficial for educators making decisions on the implementation of guided reading.

The aforementioned studies were included in this section as a result of the guided reading literacy practices within the studies resembling the processes of guided reading according to the experts Fountas and Pinnell (1996). Other studies were not included because of a lack of verifiable information on best practices of the guided reading approach according to viable processes of guided reading. Studies that did not enhance my understanding of the implementation of guided reading approach in elementary schools or relevant to improving reading scores were not included.

Implementation of Guided Reading

When arranging for guided reading groups, teachers consider reading levels as well as the instructional needs of students. Grouping students by level and need allows

teachers to differentiate and design instruction toward students' needs and interests. Once students are grouped, the teacher decides when to meet with each group on a weekly schedule, allowing for frequent group rotations. Ideally, meeting with each group daily would be the ultimate goal, if time permits. Research supports greater effects when guided reading groups are met with on a more frequent basis. In an empirical quasi-experimental study, results revealed a greater effect on students' reading ability when guided reading was implemented more frequently (Young, 2019).

Mindful of the need for growth and closing academic gaps, guided reading is an ideal approach as instruction is uniquely and specifically designed for students within each group. Consequently, with such a concentrated focus, some students progress more rapidly while other students maintain a steady pace of improvement. Therefore, guided reading operates with flexible and dynamic grouping. Guided reading grouping differs from many reading programs and other types of grouping arrangements where students move through quizzes or lessons to achieve promotion to a higher group. Programs, unlike guided reading, most commonly require a goal of a predesignated number of quizzes, assignments, or lessons. Reading programs typically employ static grouping arrangements where students' progress is measured in completion of tasks as opposed to improvement of skill. Unfortunately, as a result of task-oriented group arrangements, gaps can remain undetected, unattended, or even widen in regard to time spent where ineffective practice occurs. The programmatic materials and methods requiring a lockstep approach to teaching, limit instruction and do not always allow teachers to be responsive to students' individual needs (Bond & Dykstra, 1997; Clay, 1966; Routman, 2000). Conversely, the guided reading approach allows teachers to employ responsive teaching,

attending to students' acquisition of skills and specific gaps when planning next steps of instruction. Running/reading records taken during guided reading pave the way for responsive teaching to occur allowing the teacher to design instruction and respond to the specific needs of students. Furthermore, specific information acquired during guided reading and from running/reading records allows the teacher to make informed adjustments and considerations in movement within groups allowing opportunities for optimal growth to occur for all students. Therefore, intentional planning and dynamic grouping are pivotal while implementing guided reading.

As students progress in reading skills, the bar is raised in terms of culminating skills and text complexity, opening opportunities for higher levels of achievement. A gradual release of responsibility evolves in response to growth allowing the student to acquire more independence in reading. The ultimate goal in instruction is to empower students to work through texts independently (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983a, 1983b; Fountas & Pinnell, 2017). Consequently, successful navigation through increasingly complex texts requires students to employ strategic actions while reading. Strategic actions focused on in guided reading include thinking within, beyond, and about the text which also involves monitoring, rereading, and self-correcting when necessary to comprehend the text (Barone et al., 2019; Fountas & Pinnell, 2017). Although students' independence increases with development, teacher guidance is an integral role in the success of student gains. Theoretically, social constructivism supports instructional approaches such as guided reading where students receive instruction and guidance from a knowledgeable teacher on the use of strategic actions (Vygotsky, 1978). Decisions concerning materials, groupings, and instruction made by the teacher are vital to the

success of student growth and require concerted actions on gaining background knowledge of students.

Informed decisions shape the increase of student achievement when selecting reading material for guided reading. Consideration of students' interest with a topic can make a difference in the amount of motivation a student will have toward reading. When teachers select books for student groups, considering favorable topics and appropriate levels for the students may initiate a better response from students during the guided reading lesson. Familiarity and interest in topics can also affect how students interact with texts (Marinak & Gambrell, 2010; Meece et al., 2006; Oakhill & Pedrides, 2007; Routman, 2000). Overall, the decisions and actions taken in planning and implementing guided reading can differentiate instruction for students' need and interest as well as enhance students' growth in reading achievement.

Reading Assessments

The use of assessments that are designed to determine how students are problem solving and interacting with texts are effective in guiding instruction. Viewing students' independent performance allows the teacher to adjust instruction for mastery before moving on to culminating skills (Clay, 1991b; 2019; Fountas & Pinnell, 2017). School systems relying solely on summative measures lack detailed information that could detect specific areas of need. Detrimental effects can occur with an overreliance on summative tests as knowledge and skills assessed may not include areas of deficits. Clay (2019) recommends standardized tests, "be supplemented at the classroom level with systematic observations of children who are in the act of responding to instruction" (p. 2). Optimally, an initial literacy diagnostic assessment is needed at the beginning of the

school year to determine specific strengths and needs of students' reading skills before instruction begins (Betts, 1954; Clay, 1979; Snow et al., 1998). Results analyzed from these initial diagnostic reports enable teachers to make informed decisions for instructional needs and grouping students in the beginning stages of guided reading. Diagnostic reports also enable teachers to view individual student needs and form groups by students' needs and reading levels. However, grouping in guided reading is a dynamic process and needs to be monitored well after the initial group placement. Therefore, a systematic measurement involving an observation of a student's behavior during the reading process is beneficial and necessary for making effective instructional decisions (Clay, 1979, 1991a, 2019). Guided reading instructional arrangements provide opportunities for teachers to make decisions centered around students' instructional needs.

Instructional arrangements in guided reading differ from past traditional reading groups, often referred to as round-robin reading, where students took turns one at a time, and others followed along with the reader. Conversely, in guided reading groups, four to five students simultaneously read the same text in a silent or whisper reading fashion. While students are reading, the teacher is able to attend more closely to one student and record a running record of the reading behaviors. Barone et al., (2019) explained, "The running record focuses on oral reading and provides a systematic way to record and compare the sources of information that students use and ignore when reading aloud" (p. 525). Observations of student behaviors when reading aloud allows the teacher to notice and record specific actions of the reader.

Goodman (1967) took concerted efforts to notice and record the behaviors of readers and analyzed patterns of readers in order to tailor instruction specific to the need of a student. The systematic recording of reading behaviors developed by Goodman were not solely left to error count to be considered in a negative respect but were placed in a positive connotation replacing the term ‘error’ with ‘miscue’. Explaining the replacement in terminology associated with the behavior of a reader, Goodman (1967) stated, “The insights into his reading process come primarily from his errors, which I choose to call miscues” (p.127). The semantic and syntactic miscues were recorded and examined for possible reasons of behaviors and actions taken by the reader to better inform instruction. The analysis of miscues included examinations of reading behaviors depicting the visual similarities of the miscue and actual word in the text, similarities in meanings of words with no visual resemblance, and of miscues fitting within the syntactical structure of the text. Goodman’s divergent thinking of moving past error count to examining miscues opened up not only the window of the reader’s mind while reading but also to the minds of teachers who strive to provide effective reading instruction for students. Clay (2017) analyzed reading errors using alpha letter representation as M for meaning, S for structure, and V for visual information and explains:

> For every error, ask yourself at least three questions:
>
> **Meaning (M)** Did the meaning or the messages of the text influence the error? Perhaps the reader brought a different meaning to the author’s text.
>
> **Structure (S)** Did the structure (syntax) of the sentence up to the error influence the response? If the error occurs on the first word of the sentence, it is marked as positive for structure if the new sentence could have started that way.

> **Visual information (V)** Did visual information from the print influence *any part* of the error: letter, cluster or word? (p.27)

The miscue analysis conducted by a teacher knowledgeable of the analysis process, highlights the reader's behavior. The miscue analysis enables the teacher to notice the reason of the miscue and provide instruction to clarify misconceptions, fill gaps, and scaffold learning for the reader (Clay, 2017; Goodman, 1995).

Running records taken in a consistent manner can yield valuable information concerning students' progress and empower teachers to notice students' needs (Betts, 1954; Clay, 2019; Cowen, 2003). During the process of taking a running record, teachers record specific behaviors of students attending to meaning, visual, and structural attempts while reading a text (Clay, 2019; Fountas & Pinnell, 2017). Readers, thinking about the meaning of the text, might substitute a word of similar meaning in the place of a word in a text. An error might also occur when readers substitute a word that sounds right according to structure and syntax of language or has similar visual components (Clay, 2019; Fountas & Pinnell, 2017, 2018). A common system of recording and noting errors and self-corrections provides consistency in analysis. Running records allow for timely decisions to be applied to student learning. Specific outcomes revealed from running records inform teachers and enable an immediate response to individual needs of students. Teachers no longer have to wait until the end-of-year summative test results to determine gaps or growth measures. Instructional adjustments can be made as needs arise throughout the year. In fact, Clay (1991a) suggests, "An earlier offer of effective help to the child might reduce the magnitude of the reading problems in later schooling" (p. 13). Achievement gaps widen when deficiencies continue undetected. A miscue analysis

conducted on a reading or running record can be used to inform instruction and rectify misconceptions and deficiencies. Observations and running records employed in a consistent manner will also allow teachers to know if students are making successful gains in reading (Clay, 1991a, 1991b). Consequently, close monitoring of reading skills and responsive teaching in a differentiated learning environment allows teachers to attend to the unique needs and interests of students.

Significance of the Current Study

Shifts in accountability measures required of school districts are a catalyst to changes in instructional practices whether outcomes were favorable or otherwise. In the case of this study, a recent shift in school accountability and failure in terms of accountability measures had occurred. In response to instructional improvement, guided reading was implemented as a new instructional approach allowing for responsive teaching and close monitoring of students' reading achievement. Prior to this implementation in the school year 2019−2020, the guided reading approach was nonexistent in the school district included in this study. Previous instructional formats of mostly whole-class arrangements of instruction did not include an ongoing close monitoring of students' reading skills that guided reading provides. Improvements required from accountability measures called for a change in instruction.

When a vast amount of change occurs in school districts, a program evaluation provides a way to determine if the implementations were indeed successful including measures of academic achievement of students and fidelity of implementations. School ratings tied to accountability measures are one reason to evaluate programs; however, determining if instruction provided allows all students to grow and make academic gains

is an overarching reason to conduct a program evaluation. The guided reading approach, when implemented with fidelity, yields opportunity to closely monitor each students' reading achievement. Progress needed to close achievement gaps and make optimal gains for students cannot solely rely on quality materials and professional learning opportunities. The teachers' understanding of instructional practices and how to utilize resources, can increase the fidelity of implementation of guided reading. Student progress relies on the effective implementation of instructional practices.

Ford and Opitz (2008) designed a national survey of guided reading practices and conducted research to determine the understanding of guided reading practices held by teachers. The study conducted by Ford and Opitz (2008) served as a model for the study in this research as the survey and process fulfilled the need. The need for finding teachers' current understanding of guided reading practices in the schools included in this study would also serve to update the study conducted in 2008 to determine the level of efficacy in 2020. In response to the need of further investigating the effects on guided reading, a widely used approach in elementary reading instruction, the researcher sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions of teachers on the implementation of guided reading?
2. In what areas of guided reading do teachers need further training and support?

CHAPTER III

Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the procedures used in this mixed methods study. A mixed methods study was designed to evaluate a newly implemented instructional approach to a school district. A convergent parallel mixed methods design is an appropriate methodology as both qualitative and quantitative data have equal value in providing information to answer the questions in this research.

Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions of teachers on the implementation of guided reading?
2. In what areas of guided reading do teachers need further training and support?

Research Design

This mixed methods study used a convergent parallel design. In a convergent parallel design, the researcher initially analyzes the qualitative and quantitative data separately and then merges the two sets of data for an additional integrated lens in which to view results. Researchers find the convergent parallel design beneficial in viewing results from a multiple lens approach (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Morse, 1991; Reutzel & Mohr, 2014). Creswell and Plano Clark (2017) state, “The integration in a convergent design is to develop results and interpretations that expand understanding, are comprehensive and are validated and confirmed” (p. 221-222). This simultaneous integration allows for more information to be considered in-depth as opposed to a single

narrowly focused perspective. Reutzel and Mohr (2014) explain the benefits of a mixed methods study utilizing the convergent parallel design as, “it allowed us to directly compare and contrast quantitative and qualitative data for corroboration and validation purposes” (p. 15). Both quantitative and qualitative findings can complement each other during simultaneous triangulation (Morse, 1991). Simultaneous triangulation will be used in this study for a comprehensive approach using qualitative and quantitative data at the same time to answer the research questions.

The convergent parallel design correlates with the need of a program evaluation. Multiple lens of results are necessary in program evaluations to decipher existing needs in a program. The quantitative data collected from the multiple-choice items included in the survey of this study provided measures, percentages, and magnitudes of participants’ understanding of concepts. The qualitative data gathered from the open response questions allowed participants the opportunity to anonymously explain challenges and benefits experienced during the implementation of guided reading. The participants were able to express viewpoints in-depth on the open response questions which enabled the researcher to better analyze and interpret the data. Figure 1 displays the process of data collection and analysis in the convergent parallel design.

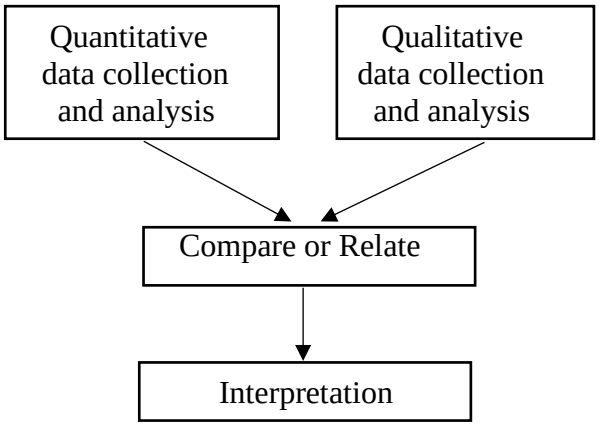


Figure 1. *Convergent Parallel Design.* Note: The convergent parallel design is one of the mixed methods designs proposed to merge and simultaneously analyze data (Bishop, 2014; Creswell & Clark, 2017).

The convergent parallel design in this study allowed the researcher to collectively retrieve the quantitative data from the multiple-choice questions and the responses from the open-ended questions to form a bridge of information. The qualitative data complemented the quantitative data providing a cohesiveness of information to analyze (Bishop, 2014; Reutzel & Mohr, 2017). The qualitative, quantitative, and merged data formed the simultaneous triangulation needed in this research.

Research Setting Context

The research took place in a rural school district in the southwestern United States. Elementary schools from a rural public-school district were included in this study. The rural school district received an overall rating of a B by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for the 2018−2019 school year; however, the Academic Growth domain received an F rating. The rural district enrollment for the 2018−2019 school year was slightly below 4000 students. Table 1 provides the demographic data of the district in the 2018−2019 school year.

Table 1

Demographic Data for District: 2018-2019

2018-2019 School Year	African American	Hispanic	White	American Indian	Asian	Pacific Islander	2+ Races	Economically Disadvantaged	English Learners	At-Risk
	9.6%	23.8%	62.6%	0.3%	0.8%	0.0%	3.0%	73.0%	8.5%	47.7%

In the school year of 2019−2020, district enrollment for the district was 4386. Table 2 provides demographic data of the district for the 2019−2020 school year.

Table 2

Demographic Data for District: 2019-2020

2019-2020 School Year	African American	Hispanic	White	American Indian	Asian	Pacific Islander	2+ Races	Economically Disadvantaged	English Learners	At-Risk
	9.6%	25.0%	61%	0.3%	0.7%	0.0%	3.6%	78.0%	9.0%	57.0%

The school district is comprised of three elementary campuses. Each campus serves elementary students reaching up to the fifth-grade. Each of the elementary campuses in this study average approximately 100 students per grade-level. Although many students are transported in from rural residences, the elementary campuses are centrally located in the town. One of the campuses was designed as an elementary campus; however, the other campuses were originally designed in the 1970s for students in higher grades. Renovations occurred to better accommodate elementary aged students as the district grew and the need to increase the elementary campuses emerged.

Participants

Fifty-three of a possible 66 participants in the 2019−2020 school year were included in the study. All participants in this study were teachers of elementary students of grades kindergarten through fifth. More participants teaching kindergarten through third grades were represented in this study as compared to grades fourth and fifth due to the tapering effect of teacher to student ratio in the upper elementary grades. The staffing of literacy teachers for the elementary grades in the district of this study included 15 total teachers for kindergarten through second-grade, nine teachers for third-grade, and nine teachers for fourth-grade. The fifth-grade literacy instructors on each campus included one reading language arts teacher and one social studies teacher. In grades kindergarten through second, the teacher to student ratio was one to 20; however, the teacher to student ratio in the upper grades did not maintain a comparable balance as did the early elementary grade-levels.

Logistics in the educational field as well as the purpose for this study did not lend random sampling to be attainable or effective. Consequently, purposive sampling, a nonrandom sampling, was used in this study. According to Velluntino and Schatschneider (2011), “Purposive sampling of diverse exemplars…may enhance external validity by allowing the investigator to assess the degree to which causal inferences can be generalized” (p.166). In order to investigate the knowledge teachers had of guided reading within the grade-levels they taught, the sample included all reading language arts elementary teachers in a district where guided reading was implemented. Creswell and Poth (2018) state, “it is a purposeful sample that will intentionally sample a group of people that can best inform the research about the research problem under

examination" (p. 148). All elementary schools implemented guided reading in the district included in this study. Therefore, purposive sampling of all elementary language arts teachers was appropriate for the purposes of this study. Furthermore, because the researcher sought to determine the understanding the teachers of elementary students had throughout the district, all elementary reading language arts teachers' input was determined to yield valuable information.

Instrumentation

The researcher collected pre-existing data from teachers of elementary students in the school year 2019–2020. One instrument used to assess teachers' understanding of guided reading was a survey closely resembling a national survey of guided reading practices as designed by Ford and Opitz in 2008. The rigorous design of the national survey of guided reading included a review by a team of professional development experts well versed in guided reading, a pilot administration of the survey to a graduate class knowledgeable of primary classroom experiences, and revisions to produce the final survey. The questions included in this survey are focused around key issues considered to be critical for successful implementation of guided reading and are similar to the survey conducted by Ford and Opitz (2008). The five key issues addressed in this study were embedded in the survey questions as (a) assessment tools and techniques, (b) purposes for using guided reading groups, (c) grouping techniques, (d) texts used, and (e) planning instruction with and away from the teacher (Ford & Opitz, 2008).

Modifications to the national survey of guided reading practices were tailored to meet the program evaluation needs of this study. The questions pertaining to accessibility to texts used were omitted due to the availability of the Fountas & Pinnell

guided reading book sets for teachers to access. A question requesting the grade taught was also added in order to utilize results in determining needs of professional learning for each grade-level. Two open ended questions were also provided at the end of the survey for teachers to respond to concerning what was perceived to be challenging and beneficial in the implementation of guided reading. Coupled with the 28 multiple choice formatted items, the open-ended questions allowed respondents to elaborate and express ideas providing valuable details to help guide professional learning decisions for the district included in this study.

Procedure

Uniquely, fulfilling the pre-existing need for a literacy program evaluation, procedures included in this study were already taking place. A literacy program evaluation was needed as a result of implementation of literacy instructional approaches new to the school district. The need for a survey was pre-established to determine teachers' understanding of instructional approaches newly implemented in the schools and professional learning needs.

An implementation of a balanced literacy approach including guided reading began at the onset of the 2019−2020 school year. The researcher and literacy specialists began fidelity checks for implementation of the balanced literacy approach and guided reading at the beginning of the 2019−2020 school year. A literacy classroom observation form (see Appendix A) specifically designed to note occurrences of the components of balanced literacy and specific actions within guided reading was utilized during the school year of implementing guided reading. The specific actions included in the guided reading section mirrored the expectations as explained in professional learning and in the

materials teachers were provided. The targeted goals and expectations of guided reading included in the observation form followed the systems of strategic actions as explained in Fountas and Pinnell resources. The observation form was used to monitor the fidelity of the implementation of guided reading. The researcher continued weekly classroom observations in the school for fidelity checks on the implementation of guided reading as well as convened with the districts' elementary literacy specialists for ongoing fidelity checks.

The researcher gained permission to use the data accessed for this study (see Appendix B). The guided reading survey was developed (see Appendix C) and, after approval from the institution's IRB, sent to the elementary teachers requesting participation via Qualtrics (2002), a digital platform enabling anonymous responses to the survey. The guided reading survey was administered during the implementation phase of guided reading. An email was sent to the teachers explaining the purpose of the survey. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected from the reports in Qualtrics (2002) and simultaneously analyzed for patterns, trends, and commonalities.

Teacher Professional Learning

Preparations for the implementation of guided reading began well before the study was considered. A pre-existing schedule of professional learning, including balanced literacy and guided reading, for teachers and administrators was conducted in the summer months prior to the initial implementation of guided reading. In-district sessions on balanced literacy and running records were also provided in a beginning-of-year academic conference by the district's literacy specialists. Balanced literacy components arranged in the reading/writing workshop model were reviewed and

modeled. Teachers participated in activities allowing for collaboration of ideas during the review and were given the opportunity to ask questions. A separate session was provided on running/reading records. The purpose of determining individual students' strengths and weaknesses was reiterated along with a modeled explanation of a common system for running/reading records. Teachers were able to practice a reading record during the session by watching a video clip of a student reading. Collaborative opportunities allowed teachers to share ideas and clarify any questions during the session.

Throughout the beginning phase of implementation of the 2019−2020 school year, teachers were also offered weekly professional learning associated with the materials and resources provided. Teachers were given two optional days and paid to attend after-school professional learning centered on the balanced literacy components and utilizing the Fountas and Pinnell Literacy Continuum. During the professional learning sessions, teachers were able to participate in activities allowing for collaboration and application of instructional practices.

Materials and Resources.

Materials and resources afforded to teachers and students are vital components to the learning experience. Materials designed for guided reading in the district participating in the study were not attainable in the 2018−2019 school year; however due to increased funding, quality materials were afforded to initiate and sustain a balanced literacy approach including guided reading during the 2019−2020 school year and beyond. The Fountas and Pinnell Classroom, Guided Reading Book Sets, Prompting Guides, and Literacy Continuum books were purchased to begin implementation of guided reading in the 2019−2020 school year. Due to the fiscal year beginning in September, school

districts' funding opens after the initial start of school. Consequently, although the instructional practices were initiated at the start of the school year, the implementation with quality materials designed for guided reading began in late October.

In addition to new materials, the schools in this study followed and had access to curriculum resources provided in the TEKS Resource System that are aligned to the state standards. However, in the previous 2018−2019 school year, access to the TEKS Resource System did not occur until mid-year. Materials provided in the 2018−2019 school year included the district adopted textbooks with coinciding supplementary materials. Additionally, unlike the 2019−2020 school year, materials specifically designed with an emphasis on phonics instruction were used 90 minutes per day in a whole class format for all elementary students in the 2018−2019 school year.

Data Analysis

The research questions in this study were addressed through a qualitative analysis of open-ended responses and a quantitative analysis of frequency and percentages of responses. A multi-method approach provided an in-depth view at multiple angles of information collected from the survey. The qualitative and quantitative analyses served the purpose of the research questions in connection to the need of a program evaluation.

As suggested by Baumann and Bason (2011), "data analysis procedures should be thoughtful, consistent with the research questions, and systematic" (p. 416). The design of this study was driven by the research questions. The researcher selected a convergent parallel design because it provided a concurrent view of the quantitative and qualitative data (Bishop, 2014). The data from the guided reading survey were collected via reports in Qualtrics (2002). Data were analyzed for the elementary teachers'

understanding of guided reading concepts and compared between the various grade-level groups to determine any significant differences using a factorial analysis in Statistical Package for Social Sciences Software (SPSS). Data were also examined descriptively and trends were described.

Open-ended responses were examined using constant comparison analysis, which allowed the researcher to examine the entire data set to identify underlying themes. The open-ended responses from the survey were analyzed for patterns. Following the constant comparison process suggested by Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007), the researcher first read through the data set. The data were then chunked into smaller meaningful parts, and the chunks were labeled with a descriptive title and code. The clustering and chunking of data provided opportunities for further analysis (Miles et al., 2014). Codes were then grouped by similarity to identify themes based on the groupings (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). Coding information provided an organized approach to consider results in data. Pajo (2018) explains, “A code is a word or few words that capture common meaning or categorization” (p. 289).

Evaluation coding was employed in this study and allowed the means for the researcher to determine effectiveness of the program under evaluation. Saldaña (2016) explains a program evaluation as, “the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs to make judgments about the program, improve program effectiveness, and/or inform decisions about future programing” (p. 141). Evaluation coding is appropriate for an evaluation study and can include magnitude, descriptive, and/or value coding (Saldaña, 2018). Codes and themes were also examined for frequency to find meaningful representation of the least and most

prevalent occurrences (Pajo, 2018). The analysis of coding provided a systematic approach to determine effectiveness of the implementation of guided reading in the district included in this study.

Multiple analyses allowed for increased rigor and integrity of inferences drawn from data (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). The researcher used multiple data analyses to better understand in what areas (purposes of guided reading, grouping techniques, texts, planning for instruction, and assessment) teachers were effectively implementing guided reading and in what areas teachers needed further training and support. The data analyses were utilized in the program evaluation for the district included in this study. The data analyses conducted for the program evaluation provided a systematic process to determine teachers' understanding of guided reading practices and specific needs for further training and support.

Summary

The methods followed in this study were driven by the research questions. The mixed methods convergent parallel design provided the means for a systematic program evaluation of a newly implemented instructional approach in the elementary schools of a Title I district. A survey was administered to teachers to determine what teachers understand of guided reading practices. Quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed simultaneously to provide an in-depth view of what areas (purposes of guided reading, grouping techniques, texts, planning for instruction, and assessment) teachers are effectively implementing guided reading or in need of further support. The data were analyzed for the purposes of a program evaluation and determining the effectiveness of implementing guided reading practices in the elementary schools.

CHAPTER IV

Results & Analysis

The purpose of this chapter was to report the results of this study and highlight present knowledge of guided reading. The chapter includes information on data collection, data analysis, and results. This study collected and analyzed qualitative and quantitative measures simultaneously in a convergent parallel design.

This mixed methods study was conducted to examine elementary teachers' current knowledge of guided reading in a first-year implementation as part of a program evaluation. Fifty-three of 66 elementary school teachers participated in a survey posing questions focused on common literacy practices within guided reading. The 31-question survey was modeled after the national guided reading survey created by Ford and Opitz (2008).

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. What are the perceptions of teachers on the implementation of guided reading?
2. In what areas of guided reading do teachers need further training and support?

Data Collection

Teachers were sent an email requesting anonymous participation in a guided reading online survey to help inform a program evaluation. An anonymous link to the survey was embedded in the email for convenient access of the teachers. All teachers had the option to participate or not upon receiving the link by email. If they chose to participate, they clicked on the link that took them to the survey where they read and responded to 31 multiple-choice questions and two open-response questions. Within the

email, a statement of anonymity was provided along with the estimated time of seven minutes to complete the survey. Upon reaching the maximum number of participants responding to the survey, data were extracted from Qualtrics to Excel spreadsheets.

Data extracted via Qualtrics were downloaded as two separate formats: text form and numerical values. Data from the two open-response questions were downloaded into two separate documents. The spreadsheets with numerical values were imported into SPSS to run statistical analyses of correlations. The documents with anonymous open-ended responses were imported into Dedoose (2020) as media excerpts to code and analyze.

Data Analysis

The typed responses of the two open-response questions concerning challenges and benefits of guided reading were extracted from the survey results. The text responses of challenges were uploaded as a document and named as a category type termed ‘media’ in Dedoose (2020). The text responses of benefits were uploaded as a separate media document. After reading the documents a few times and examining the responses using open coding, twenty codes (see Table 3) were determined, listed, and arranged in Dedoose (2020) for document excerpting. Document excerpting involved the reading of a response and determining a code for an excerpt of a response. Once a code was selected, the text was highlighted and assigned the code. Document excerpting and coding proceeded within the responses of challenges with the implementation of guided reading, and then the responses of benefits were coded. Descriptions of the codes in Table 3 provide the meaning of the code as indicated in the excerpts of participant responses.

Table 3

Description of Codes

Name of Codes	Description of Codes
Assessments	Lack of assessments for placement and progress monitoring
Running/Reading Records	The recording of students' reading behaviors
Discussion & Collaboration	Students having more opportunity to engage in verbalizing, conversing, and collaborating about the text and learning
Engagement & Enjoyment	Students were more engaged and enjoyed learning during guided reading
Frustrations	Frustrations of children
Grouping	Maintaining/maneuvering of small groups
Growth Gains	Growth/gains in skills
Materials	Access to quality materials
Reading Progress	Progress in reading skills
Relationships & Rapport	Relationships and rapport building of teachers and students in guided reading
Responsive to Needs	Teachers determining or meeting the needs of individual students
Social Emotional Learning	Students' feelings about themselves as readers
Stations	Creation and management of stations/centers
Time	Scheduling/amount of time
Training	Professional learning
Uncertainties	Feelings of inadequacies or unfamiliarity of materials or actions
Behavior Management	Students' behavior
Multiple Components	Learning multiple components of balanced literacy and fitting these in the schedule
Parent Communication	Communicating progress to parents
Understanding Students' Level	Reading level

Once codes were attached to excerpts of responses, analyses were conducted. The researcher examined excerpt count per media by reading each response in the challenges' document and the individual responses within the benefits' document. The researcher also analyzed code co-occurrences to investigate patterns in the factors shared in participant responses. Co-occurrences are the dual appearances of the coded factors in both the challenges and benefits documents. The extraction and coding of excerpts in both documents allowed for a code co-occurrence analysis. The high frequency of co-occurrences alerted me to uncover possible barriers hindering growth, and then they were considered as a possible solution to the challenge.

Quantitatively, the researcher examined the descriptive statistics for patterns reflective of teachers' perception and instructional practices. Percentages and counts were extracted from the survey responses and placed in tables for analysis of multiple pieces of data. Overall percentages and counts were reviewed adjacent to grade-level specific percentages and counts. The researcher also conducted simple correlation analyses to examine relationships between variables. The variables examined included the components of the guided reading approach as presented in the survey. Knowledge, texts, assessments, and grouping methods were examined for correlations specific to the effectiveness of the guided reading approach.

Findings

Important to implementing the guided reading approach with fidelity, the findings of this study included qualitative and quantitative data of teachers' perception of knowledge and practices in guided reading. The findings in this study included the practices important to the guided reading approach. Descriptive statistics provided an

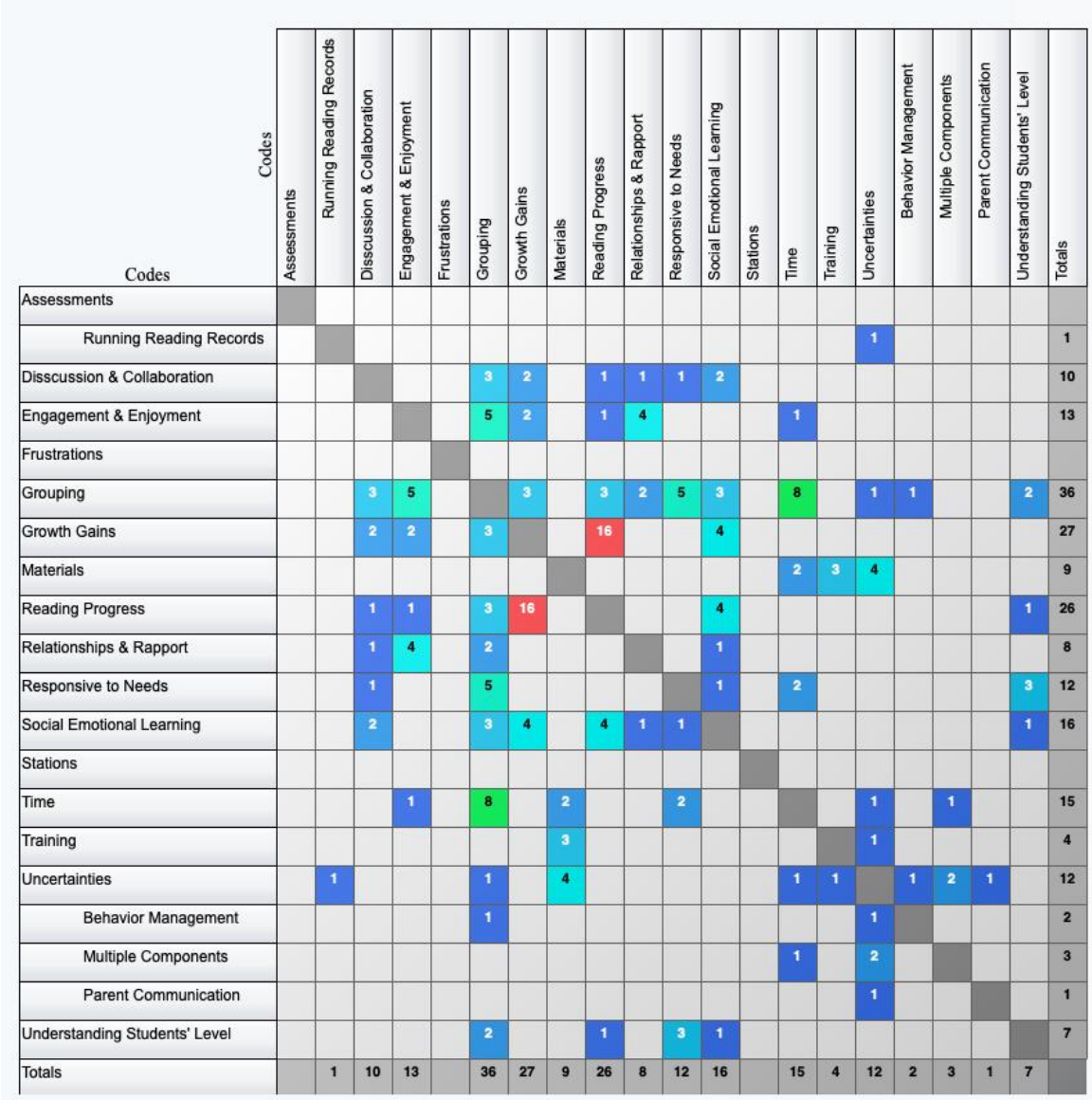
in-depth view of participants' perceived knowledge and instructional practices in the guided reading approach. Single simple correlations examined the relationships of variables in the implementation of guided reading as reported by the participants. The findings included information relevant to the implementation of the schools in this study. Information concerning the benefits and challenges of the implementation of guided reading as a new instructional approach were reported. The participants' grade-level taught in relation to the instructional practices considered important to guided reading were examined. Knowledge, texts, grouping methods, assessments, and planning away from the guided reading group were examined and described. The findings were also revealed in the tables and figures included in this study.

Benefits and Challenges

The excerpt count per media revealed a greater amount of benefits as compared to challenges. Eighty-one comments were coded as challenges in guided reading; whereas, 139 text responses were coded as benefits. The most frequently appearing codes in both the challenges and benefits' excerpts combined included *time, grouping,* and *reading progress*. The 24 text excerpts coded as *reading progress* only appeared in the responses connected to benefits; however, 32 of the 40 total text excerpts coded with *time* appeared in the challenges' responses while only appearing eight times within the text excerpts of benefits. Conversely, when examining totals of text excerpts coded as *grouping*, more responses were coded as benefits with 24 as compared to five surfacing in the text excerpts as challenges.

As displayed in Figure 2, codes used in the excerpts of both challenges and benefits are arranged in a graphic format providing a visual representation of connections

between the challenges and benefits of the implementation of guided reading. Excerpts of challenges and benefits used the same code labels. Code co-occurrences revealed an unbalanced co-appearance of *time* and *grouping* within the challenges and benefits' text excerpts, warranting further investigation. A text excerpt dual-coded as *time* and *grouping* expressed the concern of meeting with groups in guided reading and the pressure of state testing preparations. Similarly, the dual-coded text of *time* and *multiple components* expressed concerns of insufficient time coupled with the fidelity of implementation. While further investigating the 32 text excerpts coded with challenges of time, 13 remarks expressed concerns of additional time spent in a scripted reading program scheduled outside of the reading language arts classroom block of time.



Codes	Assessments	Running Reading Records	Disscussion & Collaboration	Engagement & Enjoyment	Frustrations	Grouping	Growth Gains	Materials	Reading Progress	Relationships & Rapport	Responsive to Needs	Social Emotional Learning	Stations	Time	Training	Uncertainties	Behavior Management	Multiple Components	Parent Communication	Understanding Students' Level	Totals
Assessments																					
Running Reading Records																1					1
Disscussion & Collaboration						3	2		1	1	1	2									10
Engagement & Enjoyment						5	2		1	4				1							13
Frustrations																					
Grouping			3	5			3		3	2	5	3		8		1	1			2	36
Growth Gains			2	2		3			16			4									27
Materials														2	3	4					9
Reading Progress			1	1		3	16					4								1	26
Relationships & Rapport			1	4		2						1									8
Responsive to Needs			1			5						1		2						3	12
Social Emotional Learning			2			3	4		4	1	1									1	16
Stations																					
Time				1		8		2			2					1		1			15
Training								3								1					4
Uncertainties		1				1		4						1	1		1	2	1		12
Behavior Management						1										1					2
Multiple Components														1		2					3
Parent Communication																1					1
Understanding Students' Level						2			1		3	1									7
Totals		1	10	13		36	27	9	26	8	12	16		15	4	12	2	3	1	7	

Figure 2. *Code Co-occurrences.*

Knowledge of Guided Reading

Descriptive statistics, including knowledge of guided reading, grade-level, and number of years taught, were calculated for the demographics of the 53 teacher participants. Participants ranged from 1 to 38 total years taught by the end of the 2019-2020 school year (see Table 4). As shown in Table 5, the overall knowledge of the 53 participants resulted in 91% as 'very well' to 'fairly well' informed when asked to rate their knowledge base of guided reading instruction.

Table 4

Participants' Years of Teaching and Grade-Level Taught

Years	Total	Kindergarten	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
1	2	1	0	1	0	0	0
2	4	0	0	0	2	2	0
3	3	0	1	0	0	1	1
5	2	1	0	0	0	0	1
6	5	1	0	2	1	0	1
7	7	2	3	1	0	0	1
8	2	0	1	1	0	0	0
9	2	1	1	0	0	0	0
11	2	1	0	1	0	0	0
12	2	0	2	0	0	0	0
13	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
14	4	1	2	0	0	1	0
15	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
19	2	1	0	1	0	0	0
20	3	0	0	0	1	1	1
21	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
22	2	1	0	0	0	1	0
23	2	0	0	1	1	0	0
24	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
25	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
29	2	0	0	0	2	0	0
38	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Totals	52	10	12	10	8	7	5

Note. One of the 53 participant's response was not entered in correct numerical format.

Table 5

Overall Knowledge of Guided Reading

Response	Count	Percentage
Very well-informed	13	24.53%
Fairly well-informed	35	66.04%
Not very well-informed	5	9.43%
Not at all informed	0	0.00%
Response Total	53	100%

Single Simple Correlation of Knowledge. A single simple correlation was conducted in SPSS to measure the relationship of teachers' knowledge of guided reading with the number of years taught. Assumptions were tested, and data were found to be normally distributed. Outliers remained in the statistics to give an accurate indication of the participants' perceived knowledge of guided reading. A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship of teachers' knowledge of guided reading and total years taught. Results revealed no correlation between the two variables $r = .056$, $n = 52$, $p = .69$. According to the scatterplot, (see Figure 3), data were not homoscedastic between knowledge and years.

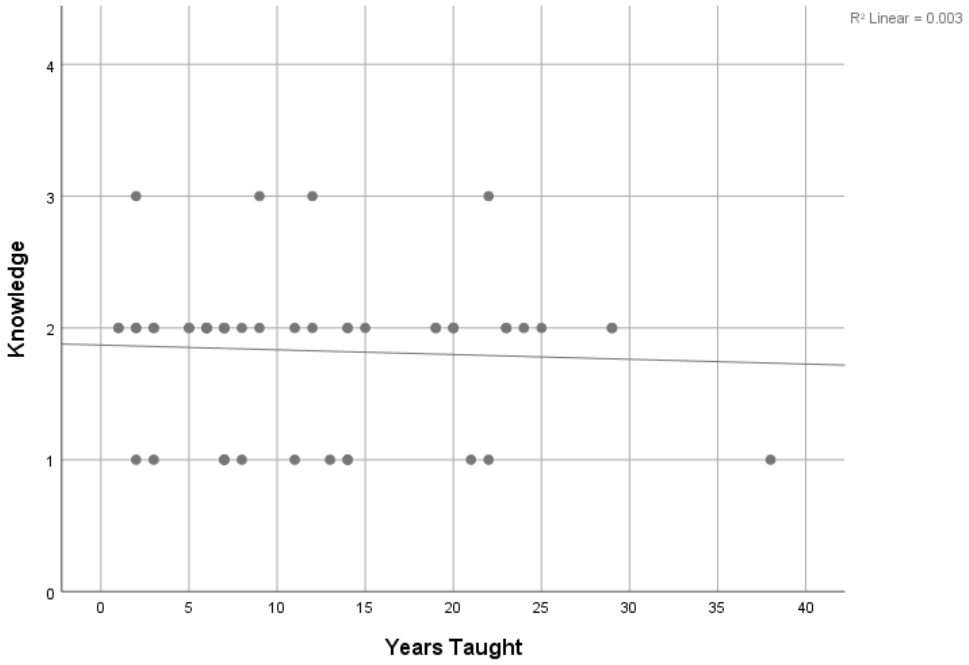


Figure 3. *Simple Scatter with Fit Line of Knowledge by Years Taught.*

Texts Used in Guided Reading

Descriptive analyses revealed that 68% of the 53 participants reported utilizing texts on students' instructional levels during guided reading while 32% reported students did not always read books at instructional level during guided reading (see Table 6). First -grade teacher participants were the highest percentage (83%) of the elementary grades who chose texts on students' instructional levels during guided reading while second-grade revealed the highest percentage (60%) of teachers not using texts on students' instructional grade-level during guided reading. Eighty percent of the kindergarten teachers used texts on students' instructional level; whereas, 75%, 57%, and 67% of third, fourth, and fifth-grade teachers, respectively, used texts on students' instructional level during guided reading.

Single Simple Correlations of Texts

A single simple correlation was conducted in SPSS to examine the relationship between narrative and informational texts being used in guided reading. Assumptions were tested, and data were found to be normally distributed. Outliers remained in the statistics to give an accurate indication of instructional practices occurring in guided reading groups. A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to examine the relationship of only narrative texts being used during guided reading instruction by grade. Results revealed no correlation between the two variables (r = .11, n = 53, p = .45). According to the scatterplot, (see Figure 4), data were not homoscedastic between the sole use of narrative texts and grade.

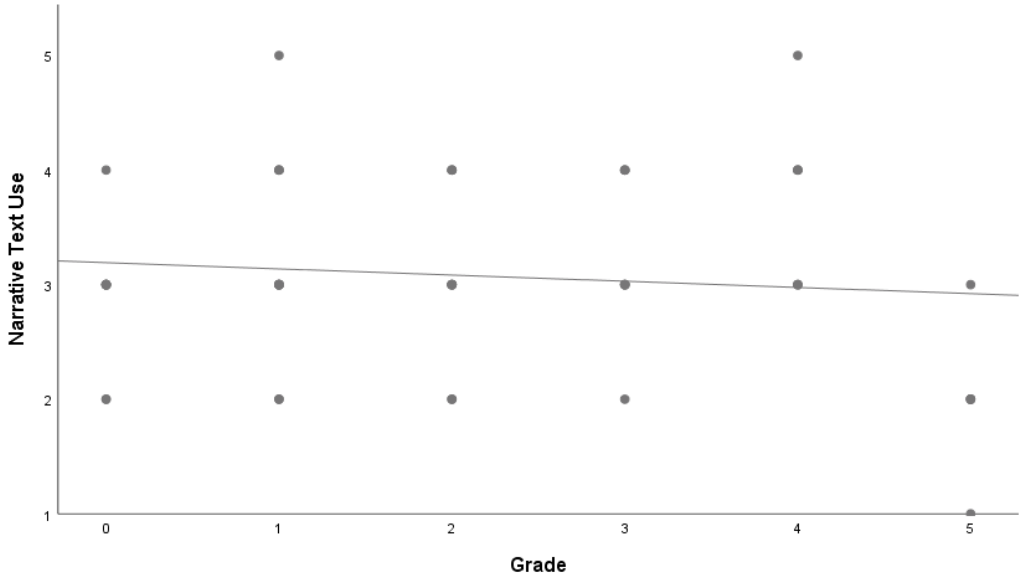


Figure 4. *Single Simple Correlation of Narrative Texts and Grade-Level Taught.*

Single Simple Correlation of Instructional Leveled Text

A single simple correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between grade-level taught and the use of on or off instructional level text during guided reading.

Assumptions were tested, and data were found to be normally distributed. Outliers remained in the analysis to indicate accurate measures of instructional practices occurring in guided reading groups. A Pearson-product moment correlation coefficient was computed to examine the relationship of grades using on/off instructional leveled text during guided reading. Results revealed no correlation between the two variables (r = .135, n = 53, p = .34). According to the scatterplot, (see Figure 5), data were not homoscedastic between using text on or off students' instructional level by grade.

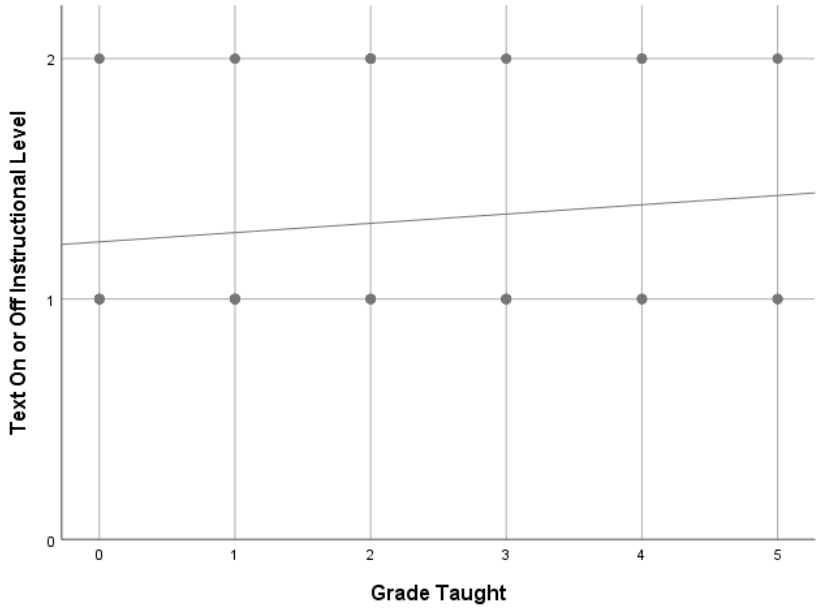


Figure 5. *Single Simple Correlation of Grade-Level Taught and Instructional Leveled Text.*

Table 6

Percentages of Instructional Level Texts Used in Guided Reading

Overall / Grade-Level	Overall	Kindergarten	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Total Count	53	10	12	10	8	7	6
All students read books at the instructional level.	36	8	10	4	6	4	4
Students do not always read books at the instructional level.	17	2	2	6	2	3	2
Percentage Totals	Overall	Kindergarten	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
All students read books at the instructional level.	67.9%	80.0%	83.3%	40.0%	75.0%	57.1%	66.7%
Students do not always read books at the instructional level.	32.1%	20.0%	16.7%	60.0%	25.0%	42.9%	33.3%

Grouping Methods

Important to guided reading and the differentiated learning context, grouping methods were reported by participant responses. Participants were able to select all multiple-choice response items that applied allowing for the response of *homogenous by developmental level and need* to be chosen as a grouping method. As shown in Appendix D, nine of 53 participants reported grouping students as *homogeneous by developmental level and need*, which leads to a more intentional method of grouping students in guided reading. Forty-three of the 53 participants grouped students solely by *level*, and 17 participants grouped students only by *need*. One participant grouped students *heterogeneously* while four other participants chose *homogenous by other method*. As shown in Appendix D, 12 participants selected dual responses to grouping methods. Nine of the 12 participants who chose dual responses, chose *homogeneous by developmental level* and *homogenous by need*.

Single Simple Correlation on Frequency of Guided Reading Groups

A single simple correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between the frequency of guided reading groups being met with and grade-level taught. Assumptions were tested, and data were found to be normally distributed. A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to examine the relationship of grade-level taught and the frequency of how many days per week each guided reading group met. Results revealed no correlation between the two variables, $r = .176$, $n = 53$, $p = .21$. According to the scatterplot, (see Figure 6), data were not homoscedastic between grade-level and frequency. Overall, no correlation existed between frequency of guided reading occurring and grade-levels.

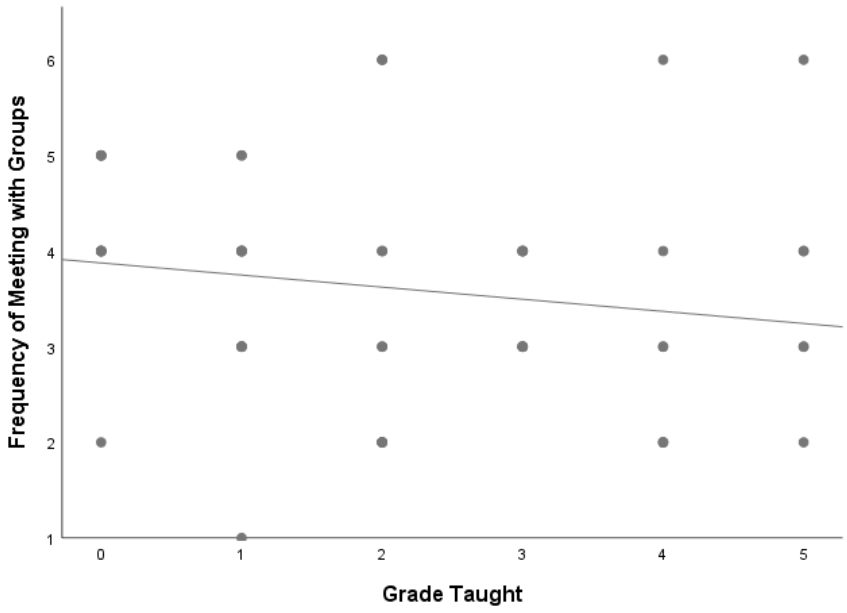


Figure 6. *Single Simple Correlation of Frequency of Guided Reading Groups by Grade-Level Taught.*

As shown in Table 7, some grade-levels facilitated more groups within a week than other groups. Ninety percent of kindergarten teachers reported meeting with each group for three to four days in a week while first-grade teachers met with each group two to three days a week. Upper elementary grade teachers met with groups at even lower frequencies. Sixty percent of third-grade teachers met with guided reading groups at a frequency rate of one to two days. Fifty percent of the fourth-grade teachers met with guided reading groups only two days a week while the other 50% met with students three days a week. Seventy-two percent of fifth-grade teachers reported meeting with each guided reading group only one to two days a week. Cumulative totals indicate that 45% of groups met two or less days per week.

The grouping method in guided reading is dynamic considering a best fit for student growth. Progress monitoring in students' reading skills requires the teacher to shift students within groups according to need and level. Observations and ongoing assessments allow for appropriate grouping changes to be made and provide opportunity for students to increase in reading achievement.

Table 7

Frequency Percentage of Guided Reading Groups by Grade-Level

Number of Days	All	Kindergarten	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Less than 1 day	1.9%	0.0%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
1 day	17.0%	10.0%	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%	42.9%	16.7%
2 days	26.4%	0.0%	33.3%	20.0%	50.0%	28.6%	33.3%
3 days	35.8%	50.0%	41.7%	20.0%	50.0%	14.3%	33.3%
4 days	11.3%	40.0%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
5 days	7.5%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	14.3%	16.7%
n	53	10	12	10	8	7	6

Single Simple Correlation of Group Changes

A single simple correlation was conducted in SPSS to examine the relationship of changes in groups by grade taught. Assumptions were tested, and data were found to be normally distributed. A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to examine the relationship of group changes and grade-level taught. There was a significant low correlation at $r = .309$, $n = 53$, $p < .05$. According to the scatterplot, (see Figure 7), data were not homoscedastic between grade and group changes. Higher frequencies of group changes are associated with the lower grade-levels.

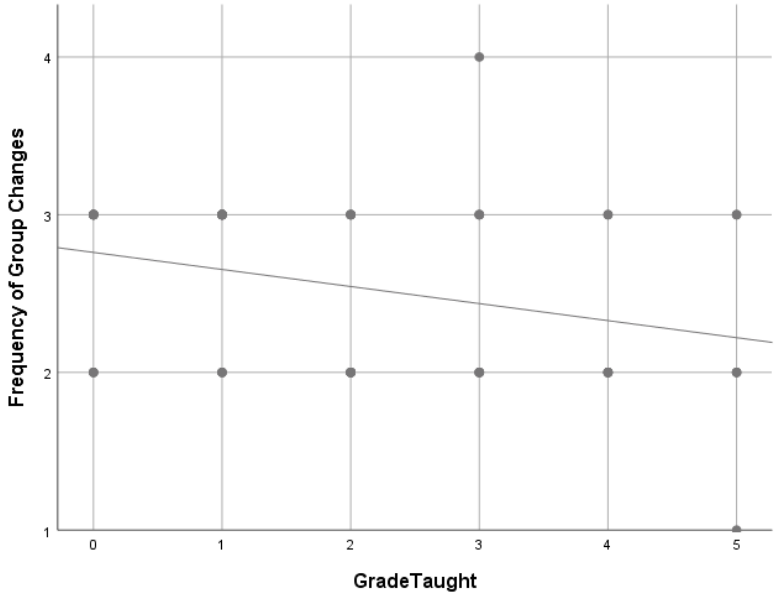


Figure 7. *Single Simple Correlation of Group Changes*

Assessments Used in Guided Reading

Diagnostic instruments were nonexistent in the initial implementation phase. Teachers relied on familiar assessment measures to determine students' initial group placement in guided reading groups. Table 8 displays the diagnostic or assessment tools utilized by teachers in this study to place students in groups. Participants were allowed to choose all responses that applied to their use of diagnostic assessments for group

placement. An additional open response choice was offered to specify any tools other than the designated options in the multiple-choice items.

Table 8

Diagnostic Assessment Tools

All Optional Responses	**Overall Percentages of Responses**	**Count**
Records from previous year	13.85%	18
Running Records or Individual Reading Inventory	33.85%	44
Scores from reading program assessments	16.15%	21
Daily observation	30.77%	40
Other specified responses included: (Istation, Individual reading assessment, BAS, testing, teacher notes, Istation ISIP)	5.38%	7

Guided reading is designed for ongoing monitoring of students' reading skills. Running/reading records allow for immediate instructional shifts tailored to students' needs. Analyzing the outcomes allows teachers to effectively plan next steps of instruction for each student. Table 9 reveals information concerning the current practices of the teachers' responses concerning the frequency of conducting running/reading records.

Table 9

Overall Frequency of Running/Reading Records

Response	Percentage	Count
Less than once per month	7.55%	4
Once per month	47.17%	25
Twice per month	24.53%	13
Three times per month	16.98%	9
Four times per month	3.77%	2
Five times per month	0.00%	0
Total participant responses	100%	53

Single Simple Correlation on Frequency of Running/Reading Records by Grade

A single simple correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between the frequency of running/reading records administered per month and grade. Assumptions were tested, and data were found to be normally distributed. Outliers were kept in the data for accurate measures of instructional practices per grade-level. A Pearson-product moment correlation coefficient was computed to examine the relationship of grade and the frequency of ongoing assessment of reading skills with running/reading records. Results revealed a negligible correlation between the two variables $r = .225$, $n = 53$, $p = .11$. According to the scatterplot in Figure 8, data were not homoscedastic between grade and frequency of running/reading records.

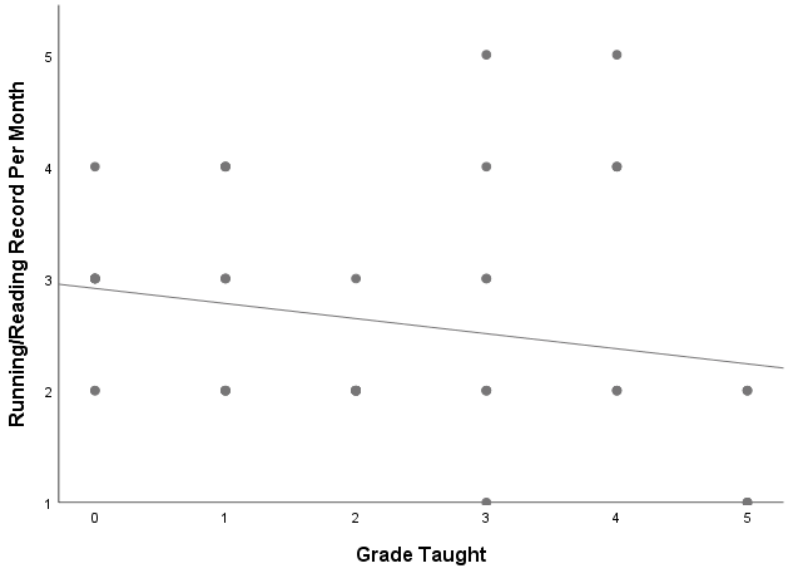


Figure 8. *Frequency of Running/Reading Records by Grade*

Planning Instruction Away from Guided Reading Group

Planning for instruction away from the teacher in the guided reading approach allows for students to independently explore and practice literacy skills. When participants were asked what other students were doing while the teacher worked with guided reading groups, 87% of the students worked at centers, 74% worked on independent seat work, 36% worked in readers'/writers' workshop, 4% worked on inquiry projects, 4% worked with another adult in a separate guided reading group, and 8% chose the response of other (see Table 10). Other specified responses included silent reading, reading with us, Chromebook assignments in Google Classroom, and independent reading and/or writing in a Reader Response Journal. The majority of the learning context situated away from the teacher and involving students working at centers/stations, warranted further investigation as to the types of activities provided. Word work activities, computer, and independent reading were the three most frequent

center/station activities reported responses by the participants. Appendix E provides percentages by grade-level of all activities chosen by participants when requested in the survey to choose no more than five most frequent activities students usually do at centers/stations while the teacher is working with a guided reading group.

Table 10

Learning Environment Away from Guided Reading Group

Type of Environment	All	Kindergarten	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Working at centers/ stations	88.7%	100%	91.7%	80%	100%	85.7%	66.7%
Working on independent seat work	73.6%	90%	66.7%	70%	62.5%	71.4%	83.3%
Working with another adult in a separate guided reading group	3.8%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%	16.7%
Working on inquiry projects	3.8%	0%	0%	10%	0%	0%	16.7%
Working in readers'/ writers' workshop	35.8%	10%	50%	50%	37.5%	28.6%	33.3%
Other	7.5%	0%	0%	10%	0%	14.3%	33.3%

Note. Participants could select more than one option

Time in Guided Reading

Time in guided reading emerged as a recurring component within instruction, grouping, and scheduling. Time was reported 32 times as the most prevalent factor listed in the open text response for challenges and co-occurring as a benefit eight times (see Figure 9). Participant comments in the open responses of time challenges reported an insufficient time being allotted for guided reading. Time constraints of fitting in requirements of other content, programs, and state testing preparations along with guided reading were listed as concerns. Participant responses of the benefits of time in guided reading included having more individualized time with small groups of students.

Media \ Codes	Assessments	Running Reading Records	Discussion & Collaboration	Engagement & Enjoyment	Frustrations	Grouping	Growth Gains	Materials	Reading Progress	Relationships & Rapport	Responsive to Needs	Social Emotional Learning	Stations	Time	Training	Uncertainties	Behavior Management	Multiple Components	Parent Communication	Understanding Students' Level	Totals
Challenges Text Responses.docx	1	2			1	5		16					2	32	5	11	2	3	1		81
Benefits Text Responses.docx			7	9		24	20	2	24	10	13	15		8			1			6	139
Totals	1	2	7	9	1	29	20	18	24	10	13	15	2	40	5	11	3	3	1	6	

Figure 9. *Open Text Responses of Challenges and Benefits.*

Summary of Results

Qualitative and quantitative data presented in this chapter provide an in-depth analysis of participants' knowledge of guided reading and practices reported during a first-year implementation. A high percentage of the participants' perceived knowledge of guided reading was revealed in the descriptive analysis. A significant low correlation existed in the relationship of grade-level taught and grouping methods. Group changes occurred more frequently in the lower elementary grades as compared to the upper grade-

levels. No other significant correlations between variables were revealed within the single simple correlation analyses.

CHAPTER V

Discussion

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a summary of the study and discuss the findings from the results and data analysis as presented in chapter four. A summary begins this chapter recapturing the significance and design of the study. Next, the results of the study are organized by the research questions. Finally, limitations, implications, and recommendations for research will conclude the discussion of this study.

Summary of the Study

Extensive needs and unacceptable ratings in educational systems require immediate changes in delivery of instruction. The challenges of subpar performance on state assessment coupled with economically disadvantaged effects were contended with by implementing an instructional approach new to the schools included in this study. Guided reading situated teachers and students in an instructional context allowing for differentiated instruction. The newly implemented guided reading approach provided teachers with the means to identify instructional needs of students and differentiate instruction accordingly.

As Texas public schools faced a new accountability system requiring growth for all students, schools pivoted to instructional practices focusing on the growth of each student instead of overall passing rates (TEA, n.d.). Professional learning, quality materials, and support personnel were provided for the transition of new instructional approaches as included in this study. Consequently, a program evaluation of the new implementation was needed to determine teachers' knowledge of guided reading and identify needs of future professional learning.

Procedures and Findings

A survey, replicating the national guided reading survey conducted by Ford and Opitz (2008), was modified to be used in the program evaluation of the new implementation of guided reading for the schools in this study. The following questions addressed the needs of the program evaluation in this study:

1. What are the perceptions of teachers on the implementation of guided reading?
2. In what areas of guided reading do teachers need further training and support?

A convergent parallel design was employed to gain an in-depth view of a first-year implementation of the guided reading approach in a rural school district located in the southwestern portion of the United States. Fifty-three of a possible 66 participants completed the survey. The survey was designed in Qualtrics, and an invitation to participate in the anonymous survey was sent via a customary email to the participant sample. The email included the invitation for elementary teachers of the schools in this study to respond to an anonymous survey. The survey was closely designed to the national guided reading survey of Ford and Opitz (2008), and it was conducted to provide information for a program evaluation of a newly implemented instructional approach. One significant low correlation surfaced in grouping methods while other results revealed negligible correlations. The results and responses collected in this survey were used to inform the program evaluation and improvement of literacy instructional practices.

In the attempt to address the first research question of examining teachers' perceptions on the implementation of guided reading, teachers were asked how they would rate their knowledge base of guided reading instruction according to a range of *very well-informed* to *not informed at all*. Ninety-one percent of the 53 participants

responded as being *very well-informed* to *fairly well-informed* of guided reading instruction. Sixty-six percent of the 90% responding perceived to be *fairly well-informed*. This response, in conjunction with other results, surfaced concern of the high percent of perceived knowledge of participants' guided reading. In search of significant areas of strength and gaps in knowledge, the researcher conducted a single simple correlation of teachers' knowledge and number of years taught; however, no positive correlation between the two variables was present.

Text Selections in Guided Reading

An important consideration in guided reading is to provide students with a balance of informational and narrative texts which could aid in shifting the declines of reading achievement (Ford & Opitz, 2018). While targeting growth for all students, a variety of books allows teachers to consider students' interest in the selection of texts to be used in guided reading groups. Conversely, a lack of quality materials and a limited supply of interesting texts that appeal to students who typically score low in reading achievement add to the low motivation and deficits of students' reading (Gambell & Hunter, 1999; Farris et al., 2009). The ongoing gender gap in elementary schools, with boys scoring lower than girls in reading, could be decreased by providing texts that are more appealing to boys (Oakhill & Petrides, 2007; Wilsenach & Makaure, 2018). The findings of this survey indicated that 49% of books chosen for use during guided reading were narrative stories only. An improvement goal for the schools in this study is to use more informational texts and consider topics of interest for students to read while in guided reading groups.

Guided reading, centered around students' levels and needs, is designed as a differentiated approach to reading instruction. Traditional instructional methods of a whole group approach were followed to maintain the pace of the state curriculum and assessed standards. School accountability measures tied to high stakes testing drove schools into test-centered instructional methods (Davis & Willson, 2015; ILA, 2017; Sousa & Tomlinson, 2018). New school accountability measures of Texas public schools provided educators with the educational context to apply instructional approaches that focus on student growth (TEA, n.d.). The guided reading approach, when implemented with fidelity, includes the use of diagnostic assessments to identify students' reading levels and needs for reading instruction (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017; Ford & Opitz, 2008).

The identification of the levels and needs of students provides the teacher with information to select texts appropriate for the instructional needs of students within the guided reading groups. Combatting the holistic approach of overlooking specific reading gaps in students, guided reading allows the teacher to identify and close gaps when selecting texts appropriate for instructional needs of students (Ford & Opitz, 2008). Guided reading, focusing on students' reading levels and needs, provides teachers with a method to scaffold instruction. As students grow in reading skills, new goals and increasingly challenging texts are provided which employ a scaffolded approach to learning (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, 2017). Foorman et al., 2016 stated, "Text selection should reflect student abilities, the purpose of instruction, and the degree of scaffolding and feedback available" (p.51). Therefore, consideration of levels and needs of students are important when selecting texts for guided reading groups.

When completing the survey, participants were asked which best describes the levels of books chosen during guided reading; 68% of participants reported all students read books at instructional level. In search of a correlation between the utilization of texts on students' instructional level and grade-level taught, a single simple correlation was conducted. Results revealed no correlation between texts on or off instructional level and grade-level taught which posed a need to address text selection practices in the program evaluation.

Grouping Methods

Grouping methods in guided reading are purposeful for the intent to address students' reading level and needs. Unlike reading programs that are predesigned in sequential task-oriented fashion and maintain a static grouping approach, guided reading grouping is dynamic, addressing the growth and needs of students. As teachers monitor the progress of students' reading skills and needs, group placement can occur instantaneously. However, 45% of the participants reported changing students in guided reading groups less than once per month. Important to closing gaps and increasing students' growth in reading skills, appropriate group placement is necessary. Additionally, the frequency of meeting with groups to receive instruction designed to students' needs is an important factor to continuously monitor and address.

Grouping students homogenously by level and need provides for optimal growth because teachers can differentiate instruction for student groups. Considering only nine of the 53 participants reported grouping students homogenously by level and need reveals a concern of most students not grouped appropriately to reach optimal growth. A goal was

designed and included in the program evaluation to clarify any misconception of grouping methods.

Students afforded the opportunity to meet more frequently to receive tailored instruction with a knowledgeable teacher are situated in a learning context that maximizes growth (Vygotsky, 1979). The data collected in this study of a first-year implementation of guided reading revealed a low frequency of group meetings. Forty-four percent of teachers met with student groups two days per week or less. Research reveals significant positive effects of growth in reading skills when students meet more frequently in guided reading groups (Young, 2019). Therefore, the program evaluation for these schools included a recommendation to increase the frequency of meeting with groups and to provide more support with scheduling groups.

Assessments in Guided Reading

When initially implementing guided reading, a diagnostic assessment is needed to determine the levels and needs of students' reading skills. Teachers accessed students' previous year reading assessment records, reading program scores, daily observations, and newly administered running/reading records to examine reading level and needs but did not administer a diagnostic assessment as commonly conducted in guided reading. The importance of administering a diagnostic reading assessment to determine deficiencies and the monitoring of growth for all students was explained in the program evaluation. The program evaluation recommended for the schools to utilize the diagnostic assessments provided free of cost in the upcoming 2020-2021 school year for kindergarten through second-grade and to arrange for a team of testers trained in using the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) to assess incoming

third-grade students. A proposal was designed to test all incoming third-graders. The proposal included the logistics of a testing schedule and cost of conducting the BAS reading assessment (Fountas & Pinnell, 2013). The program evaluation recommended a beginning, middle, and end-of-year assessment for the progress monitoring of students' reading skills.

Running/Reading records were administered during the first-year implementation of guided reading at a rate of 25% twice per month and 47% only once per month. Running/reading records inform the teacher of students' needs, progress, and adjustments needed for effective instruction and need to occur on a more frequent basis to scaffold learning tailored to students' needs (Clay, 1991b, 2017, 2019; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, 2017, 2018). The program evaluation recommended an increase of conducting running/reading records which was an area in need of further support for teachers.

Planning Away from Guided Reading Group

Forty-nine percent of the participants reported spending 25 to 49% of the reading language arts block of time in guided reading while 17% spent 50 to 99% of the time in guided reading. The planning of instruction within and away from the guided reading group is important. The learning taking place away from the teacher in the guided reading group was important to investigate as the offset of group learning occurred with the majority of students for a range of 25 to 99% of the time. When participants were asked what the other students were usually doing while the teacher was working with the students in the guided reading group, 89% responded that students were working at centers/stations. Interested in the large percentage of students learning in centers/stations, an investigation occurred as to what types of learning occurred at the centers/stations.

Centers/stations included word work 85% of the time while computers and independent reading took place at 79% and 74% respectively. Given the large majority of time at centers/stations in conjunction with 85% of the stations including computers, the program evaluation recommended close attention to planning, monitoring, and specifying the activities provided for a differentiated approach for students in the centers/stations.

Limitations

One primary limitation of this study was the limited population of participants. Additionally, not all teachers of the possible participation pool completed the survey; therefore, the views only reflected the 53 participants who completed the survey. The data collected in this study only revealed the perceptions of the participating elementary teachers in the 2019-2020 school year.

Access to quality materials for guided reading instruction was a limitation at the onset of implementation. Initial steps of the implementation of guided reading began well before the quality materials arrived. The initial implementation of guided reading began with teachers only accessing texts that were available at the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year. After budget opened in September allowing for schools to make purchases, the quality materials of guided reading were ordered and arrived in October. Teachers were then able to implement guided reading with fidelity by having a wide selection of texts to choose from which matched the interests and needs of the readers.

Another limitation in this study included the global pandemic, COVID-19, causing schools to shift to a learning-at-home context in the middle of March of the 2019-2020 school year. The unprecedented factors of the COVID-19 pandemic was a cause for limitations of the first-year implementation of guided reading. Access to

materials during the COVID-19 pandemic were limited. Schools, similar to those in this study, serving large populations of economically disadvantaged, intercepted a sudden shift to providing basic needs such as food services along with initial attempts of providing materials for remote learning where many students did not have access to internet services. Consequently, quality materials of guided reading were not accessible during the months away from onsite learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Unique to a first-year implementation of guided reading and considering the context of the schools in this study, findings from this study cannot be generalized. The findings in this study are directly applicable to the schools included in this study. However, it may be useful for schools to use some information in this study to examine teachers' knowledge of guided reading and areas of guided reading in need of further support. The research design of using qualitative and quantitative data to inform a program evaluation might also be beneficial to schools implementing guided reading as a new instructional approach or other instructional practices new to schools.

Implications

Concerned with the subpar performance of students' reading achievement paired with new accountability measures focusing on the growth of all students, the schools in this study implemented an instructional approach known to differentiate reading instruction for students. Guided reading was a newly implemented instructional approach to the elementary schools in this study. Appropriate to new implementations and in an attempt to monitor the progress and fidelity of implementation of guided reading, a survey was conducted. The two questions driving the evaluation of implementation included:

1. What are the perceptions of teachers on the implementation of guided reading?

2. In what areas of guided reading do teachers need further training and support?

Implications specific to the schools included in this study include considerations of support and building knowledge of guided reading practices. Specifically, a common understanding is needed to include a balance of narrative and informational texts and the use of instructional levels within guided reading groups. As programs and state test preparations were reported as taking away time for guided reading, an improved effort on scheduling time for guided reading could allow for improved grouping methods. An increased amount of time in the schedule could increase the availability to meet with each guided reading group more frequently. Program evaluations that include surveys could provide information for the improvement of the schools in this study and other schools implementing new instructional practices.

Time emerged as a challenge throughout the results. Open responses in the survey reported more time was needed to implement guided reading with fidelity. Factors affecting the lack of time included programs outside of the reading language arts block of time and instruction designed for state assessment preparation. Perhaps when high stakes are detached from state assessments, educators will regain time to apply instructional practices that enhance the academic growth for all students. The removal of high stakes from state assessment could allow more time for instructional practices that meet the needs of all learners and could focus assessments on identifying the instructional needs of students. Diagnostic tests and running/reading records are the assessments that can guide the decisions and monitor the progress of growth for students. Therefore, an increased focus on assessments that inform instruction could improve educational systems.

Recommendations for Future Research

The educational needs and opportunities of students are situational for schools; however, as data reveals a decrease in reading scores of students, the research of current instructional practices is recommended. A survey of teachers' perceptions of guided reading included in this study was beneficial for a program evaluation and can continue to guide improvements in the schools related to the data. More research on guided reading is needed to inform instructional practices and educational improvements for all students.

Research of the arrangements, frequency, and types of assessments utilized in guided reading to identify deficits, monitor student progress, and guide instruction could inform improved practices of the effective use of assessments for reading development. Educational decisions and legislative mandates could benefit from research regarding assessments used in the guided reading approach. Matched with the school accountability measures of focusing on growth of all students, more accurate measures of assessment of reading skills will be necessary as opposed to past assessments of student performance on state standards.

Lastly, a need of quality materials was a noticeable factor in the implementation of guided reading. A magnified view of materials arriving months after the new school year began for the schools included in this study, brought awareness to the need of earlier access to funding than what is arranged for the opening of the budget in September for the public schools in Texas. Research on public school funding concerning curriculum, materials, and resources used for reading instruction might also benefit schools and the academic achievement of students.

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APPENDIX A

Literacy Observation Form

Observer:_____ Teacher:_____ Date:_____
Class Period:_____ Grade Level:_____ Time: _____ to _____

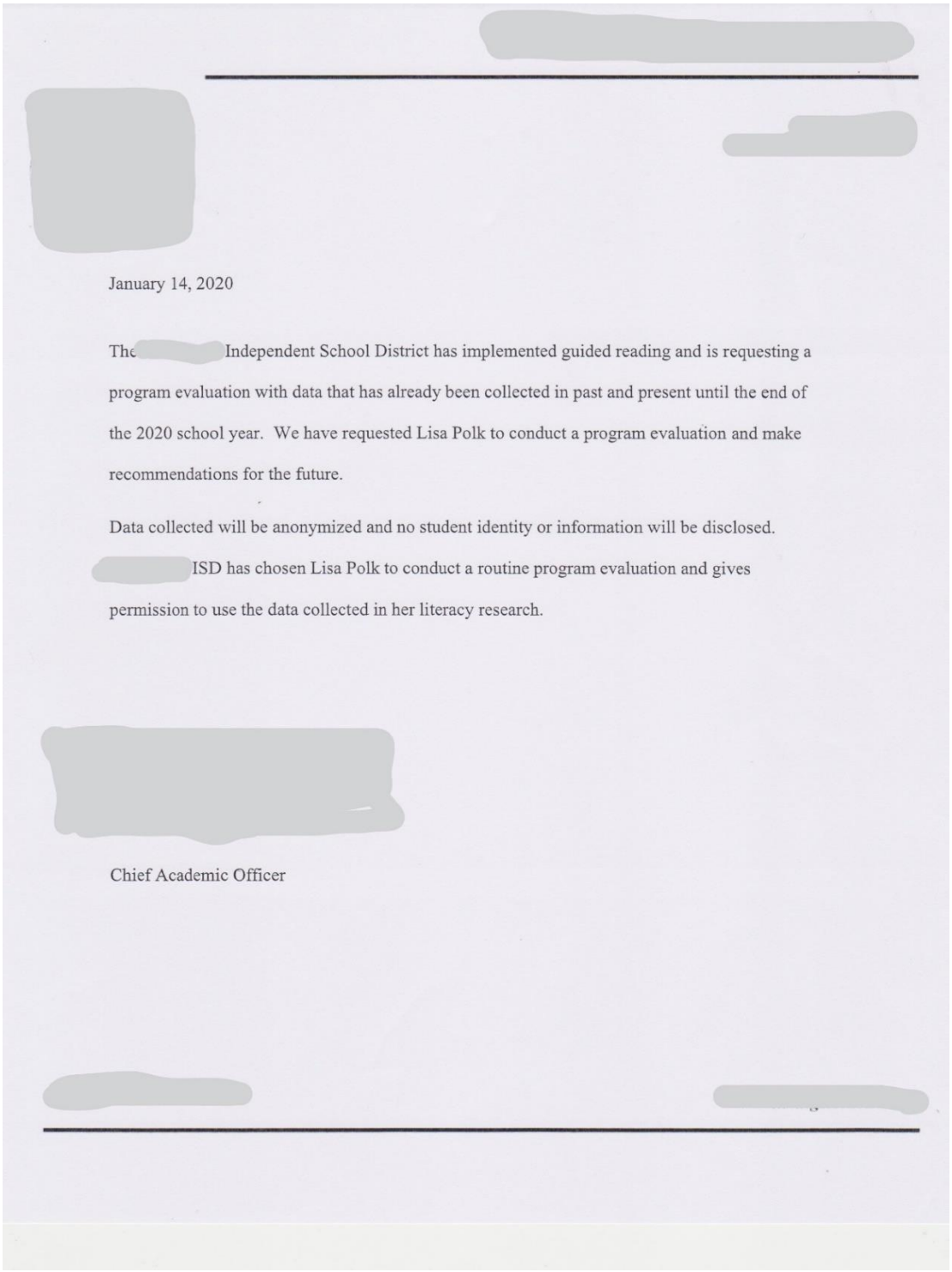
The following checked balanced literacy components were observed during this class period.

- ☐ **Interactive Read Aloud**
- ☐ **Mini-Lesson**
- ☐ **Shared Reading**
- ☐ **Independent Reading**
- ☐ **Guided Reading (small group)**
- ☐ **Individual Reading Conferences**
- ☐ **Word Work**
- ☐ **Peer/Small Group Collaboration**
- ☐ **Shared Writing**
- ☐ **Independent Writing**
- ☐ **Individual Writing Conferences**
- ☐ **Guided Writing (small group)**
- ☐ **Share Time/Author's Chair**

Guided Reading		
Target Goal & Expectation	**Observed in Action**	**Evidence**
Teacher is working with a small group of students with similar needs.	Yes / No	
Teacher and students are engaged in an introduction about the text by building background knowledge or vocabulary.	Yes / No	
Students are reading texts independently while teacher is observing and listening to a student read.	Yes / No	
Teacher is taking a reading record of a student reading.	Yes / No	
Teacher and students are engaged in a discussion about the text.	Yes / No	
Students are engaged in thinking **within** the text.	Yes / No	☐ Solving for and Using information ☐ Monitoring and self-correcting ☐ Solving Words ☐ Maintaining Fluency ☐ Adjusting ☐ Summarizing
Students are engaged in thinking **about** the text.	Yes / No	☐ Critiquing ☐ Analyzing
Students are engaged in thinking **beyond** the text.	Yes / No	☐ Inferring ☐ Synthesizing ☐ Making Connections ☐ Predicting
Students who are not participating in the guided reading small group are engaged in meaningful learning. (Ex. Station learning activities, independent reading, peer collaborative learning, literature circles, projects, research, etc.)	Yes / No	

APPENDIX B

Letter of Permission



January 14, 2020

The [redacted] Independent School District has implemented guided reading and is requesting a program evaluation with data that has already been collected in past and present until the end of the 2020 school year. We have requested Lisa Polk to conduct a program evaluation and make recommendations for the future.

Data collected will be anonymized and no student identity or information will be disclosed.

[redacted] ISD has chosen Lisa Polk to conduct a routine program evaluation and gives permission to use the data collected in her literacy research.

[redacted]

Chief Academic Officer

APPENDIX C

Guided Reading Survey

Guided Reading Survey

Thank you for participating in this survey, and your responses will remain anonymous. The purpose of this survey is to understand the use and needs of guided reading. The information from this survey will be used to improve support with the implementation of guided reading.

1. How much time do you typically have each day for reading/language arts class instruction? (Choose only ONE response)

   - Less than 30 minutes
   - 30-59 minutes
   - 1 to less than 1 ½ hours
   - 1 ½ to less than 2 hours
   - 2 hours or longer

2. What percentage of the instructional time you spend in your reading/language arts classroom is devoted to guided reading? (Choose only ONE response)

   - Do not devote any time to guided reading
   - 1%-9%
   - 10%-24%
   - 25%-49%
   - 50%-99%
   - Guided reading is the only element in your reading program

3. Which of the following best describes the primary purpose for your guided reading instruction? (Choose only ONE response)

   - To provide demonstrations of skills, strategies, response, and/or procedures to students
   - To provide interventions around scaffolded instruction for students
   - To facilitate a group response between students around a shared text
   - To facilitate a group response between students around multiple texts

4. How often is guided reading connected to shared and independent reading, writing instruction, or content areas in your instruction? (Choose only ONE response)

- Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never

5. How many guided reading groups do you typically maintain in your reading program? (Choose only ONE response)

- None
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 or more

6. How many days per week do you typically meet with each group? (Choose only ONE response)

- Less than 1 day
- 1 day
- 2 days
- 3 days
- 4 days
- 5 days

7. How long do you typically meet with each guided reading group? (Choose only ONE response)

- Less than 10 minutes
- 10-14 minutes
- 15-19 minutes
- 20-24 minutes
- 25-29 minutes
- 30 minutes or longer

8. How many students, on average are in your guided reading groups?

(Choose only ONE response)

- o 1 or 2
- o 3
- o 4
- o 5
- o 6
- o 7 or more

9. How are your students placed in guided reading groups? (Choose all that apply)

- o Homogeneous by developmental level
- o Homogeneous by need
- o Heterogeneous
- o Homogeneous by other method (specify) _____

10. Which of the following diagnostic or assessment tools do you use to place your student in guided reading groups? (Choose all that apply)

- o Records from the previous year
- o Running record or individual reading inventory
- o Scores from reading program assessments
- o Daily observation
- o Other (specify)_____

11. How often do you normally change the students in your guided reading groups?

(Choose only ONE response)

- o Never/annually
- o Less than once monthly
- o 1 to 3 times per month
- o 1 to 3 times per week
- o 4 or more times per week

12. What percentage of books chosen for use during guided reading are narrative stories only (as opposed to informational texts)? (Choose only ONE response)

- o None, use informational texts only
- o 1%-24%
- o 25%-49%
- o 50%-99%
- o 100%, use narrative stories only

13. Which best describes the levels of the books chosen during guided reading? (Choose only ONE response)

- o All students read books at the instructional level
- o Students do not always read books at the instructional level

14. While you are working with a guided reading group, what are the other students usually doing? (Choose no more than THREE most frequent activities)

- o Working at centers/stations
- o Working on independent seat work
- o Working with another adult in a separate guided reading group
- o Working on inquiry projects
- o Working in readers/writers workshop
- o Other (specify)_____

15. What are the activities students usually do at centers/stations while you are working with a guided reading group? (Choose no more than the five most frequent activities)

- o Listening Post (texts on audio)
- o Readers Theater, Puppets, Plays
- o Reading and/or Writing the Room
- o Pocket Chart Activities
- o Word Work Activities
- o Art projects
- o Book publishing
- o Buddy reading
- o Writing Activities
- o Science center
- o Social Studies center
- o Inquiry Research
- o Math center
- o Computer
- o Independent Reading
- o Big Book stand
- o Discussion groups
- o Other (specify)_____

16. How many days per week, on average, do you teach explicit skill instruction in your reading/language arts class/block?

(Choose only ONE response)

- o Do not teach explicit skill instruction
- o Less than 1 day
- o 1 day
- o 2 days
- o 3 days
- o 4 days
- o 5 days

17. How much time do you spend each day on explicit skill instruction in your reading/language arts class/block?

(Choose only ONE response)

- o Less than 10 minutes
- o 10-14 minutes
- o 15-19 minutes
- o 20-24 minutes
- o 25-29 minutes
- o 30 minutes

18. Which of the following skills do you teach in your explicit instruction?

(Choose all that apply)

- o Phonics
- o Phonemic awareness
- o Spelling
- o Vocabulary
- o Grammar
- o Comprehension skills/strategies
- o Other (specify)_____

19. How important is it to include phonics in your explicit skill instruction?

(Choose only One response)

- o Very important
- o Somewhat important
- o Not very important
- o Not at all important

20. How important is it to include phonemic awareness in your explicit skill instruction?

(Choose only One response)

- o Very important
- o Somewhat important
- o Not very important
- o Not at all important

21. How important is it to include spelling in your explicit skill instruction?

(Choose only One response)

- o Very important
- o Somewhat important
- o Not very important
- o Not at all important

22. How important is it to include vocabulary in your explicit skill instruction?

(Choose only One response)

- o Very important
- o Somewhat important
- o Not very important
- o Not at all important

23. How important is it to include grammar in your explicit skill instruction?

(Choose only One response)

- o Very important
- o Somewhat important
- o Not very important
- o Not at all important

24. How important is it to include comprehension skills/strategies in your explicit instruction? (Choose only One response)

- o Very important
- o Somewhat important
- o Not very important
- o Not at all important

25. When does explicit skill instruction usually take place in relation to your guided reading group lesson? (Choose all that apply)

- o Skills are taught before the guided reading lesson
- o Skills are taught during the guided reading lesson
- o Skills are taught after the guided reading lesson
- o Other (specify) _____

26. How many times per month, on average, do you complete a running/reading record for an individual student? (Choose only ONE response)

- o Less than once per month
- o 1
- o 2
- o 3
- o 4
- o 5 or more

27. How would you rate your knowledge base of guided reading instruction?

(Choose only ONE response)

- o Very well-informed
- o Fairly well-informed
- o Not very well-informed
- o Not at all informed

28. How much experience have you had with teaching guided reading before this school year? (Choose only ONE response)

- o A great deal
- o A lot
- o A moderate amount
- o A little
- o None at all

29. Have you had other types of training on guided reading other than what was provided for this year? (If yes, please specify)

- o No
- o Yes

30. What grade did you teach this school year?

(Choose only ONE response)

- ○ Kindergarten
- ○ 1st
- ○ 2nd
- ○ 3rd
- ○ 4th
- ○ 5th

31. How many years will you have taught at the end of this school year? (Please type your response in the space provided) _____

32. What challenges were experienced during the implementation of guided reading this year? (Please type your response in the space provided.)_____

_____

33. What benefits emerged from implementing guided reading? (This could include academic or social emotional learning, etc.) (Please type your response in the space provided._____

_____

APPENDIX D

Grouping Method Counts

Response	Total	Kindergarten	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
1) Homogeneous by developmental level	43	9	10	9	5	6	4
2) Homogeneous by need	17	4	2	5	2	2	2
3) Heterogeneous	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
4) Homogenous by other method	4	1	1	0	1	1	0
Total Count	53	10	12	10	8	7	6
Dual Coding	12	4	1	4	0	2	0
Dual Responses	12	(1) 2,4 (3) 1,2	1,3 1,2	(4) 1,2		1,4 1,2	

Note. Dual coded responses are included in overall and grade-level total counts.

The number in the parentheses represents the count of the dual coding.

APPENDIX E

Activities Percentages	**Total**	Kindergarten	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Listening Post (texts on audio)	30.2%	40.0%	58.3%	10.0%	25.0%	28.6%	0.0%
Readers Theater, Puppets, Plays	26.4%	20.0%	25.0%	10.0%	50.0%	42.9%	16.7%
Reading/ Writing the Room	47.2%	60.0%	50.0%	60.0%	25.0%	57.1%	16.7%
Pocket Chart Activities	15.1%	40.0%	25.0%	0.0%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Word Work Activities	84.9%	90.0%	91.7%	90.0%	100.0%	71.4%	50.0%
Art Projects	1.9%	0.0%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Book Publishing	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Buddy Reading	35.8%	0.0%	66.7%	30.0%	87.5%	14.3%	0.0%
Writing Activities	66.0%	30.0%	91.7%	70.0%	87.5%	42.9%	66.7%
Science center	9.4%	0.0%	25.0%	10.0%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Social Studies center	9.4%	0.0%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%	28.6%	16.7%
Inquiry Research	7.5%	10.0%	0.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%
Math center	32.1%	40.0%	66.7%	40.0%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Computer	79.2%	100.0%	83.3%	50.0%	87.5%	85.7%	66.7%
Independent Reading	73.6%	40.0%	58.3%	90.0%	100.0%	100.0%	66.7%
Big Book stand	9.4%	10.0%	16.7	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Discussion groups	9.4%	0.0%	8.3%	10.0%	25.0%	0.0%	16.7%
Other (specify)	5.7%	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	12.5%	0.0%	16.7%

VITA

Lisa J. Polk, M.Ed.

Education

Sam Houston State University 2017-2020
Doctoral Student-Doctoral in Literacy

Sam Houston State University 2012
M. Ed. Reading

Sam Houston State University 1990
B. A. in Teaching – Cum Laude

Academic Positions

Curriculum Specialist- Reading Language Arts/Social Studies K-12 2016-21
An Independent School District (ISD) in Texas

Adjunct Instructor – Integrated Reading and Writing 2013-17
Angelina College

Reading Language Arts/Social Studies Teacher – 5th Grade 2015-16
Onalaska Elementary, Onalaska ISD

Department Head – Special Education 2012-15
Resource English, Co-teach English, Dyslexia teacher, Teacher mentor, coaching 2004-15
Livingston High School Livingston, ISD

Resource English Language Arts – 7th – 8th Grade, coaching 2002-04
Livingston Jr. High School, Livingston ISD

Resource English Teacher, Adaptive Behavior, coaching 2001-02
Katy High School, Katy ISD

Resource English Teacher, Inclusion Teacher, Life Skills/Adaptive Behavior PE, Content Mastery, homebound teacher, coaching 1991-2001
Conroe High School, Conroe ISD

Honors and Awards

Doctorate in Literacy Scholarship Excellence in Teaching 2020
Sam Houston State University

Teacher of the Year 2010
Livingston High School, In-district

Publications

Refereed

Ives, S. T., Parsons, S. A., Parsons, S. W., Robertson, D. A., Daoud, N., Young, C. & Polk, L. (2020). Elementary students' motivation to read and genre preferences. *Reading Psychology, 41*(5), 1-20. https://doi.org/10.1080/02702711.2020.1783143

Young, C., Polk, L., Durham, P., & Kerbs, M. (2020). The boys are back and they're looking for drama. *Texas Journal of Literacy Education, 8*(1), 112-125.

Professional Presentations

National/International

Young, C. Rasinski, T., & Polk, L. (2020, October 15-18). The boys are back and they're looking for drama. [Conference session]. ILA 2020 Conference, Columbus, OH, United States. (Conference canceled)

Regional/Local

Polk, L. (2020, June 15). Making lemonade out of lemons: Innovative educational ideas during crises [Conference session]. Region 5 Integrating Technology VirCON, Beaumont, TX, United States.

State/Local

HB3 Texas Reading Academies. (August 2020-May 2021). Professional learning for RLA teachers/principals of K-3. In-district.

Professional Learning/Workshops

Guided Reading On-campus Sessions. (September 2020). Professional learning for RLA elementary teachers. In-district.

Balanced Literacy Best Practices in Reading Writing Workshop. (September 2020). Professional learning for RLA secondary teachers. In-district.

2019 Summer Professional Development: 1st-2nd Reading Writing Workshop. (June 2019). Professional learning for ELAR teachers. In-district.

2019 Summer Professional Development: K-2 ELAR Planning with TEKS Resource System. (June 2019). Professional learning for ELAR teachers. In-district.

2019 Summer Professional Development: 3rd-5th Reading Writing Workshop. (June 2019). Professional learning for ELAR teachers. In-district.

2019 Summer Professional Development: 6th-12th Reading Writing Workshop. (July 2019). Professional learning for ELAR teachers. In-district.

2019 Summer Professional Development: Balanced Literacy/ Reading Writing Workshop. (July 2019). Professional learning for ELAR teachers. In-district.

2019 Summer Professional Development: Principals/Assistant Principals Balanced Literacy/ Reading Writing Workshop. (July 2019). Professional learning for administrators. In-district.

2019 Summer Professional Development: Kindergarten Reading Writing Workshop. (August 2019). Professional learning for ELAR teachers. In-district.

2019 Back-to-School-Sessions: ELAR Reading Writing Workshop. (August 2019). Professional learning for ELAR teachers. In-district.

JH Social Studies TEKS Update. (May 2019). Professional learning for junior high Social Studies teachers.

HS Social Studies TEKS Update. (May 2019). Professional learning for high school Social Studies teachers.

Professional Service

American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE)
Day on the Hill 2019
Invited participant of the SHSU Team

District Advisory Committee (DAC) 2016-2020

Academic UIL Event Judge 2016-2020

Crisis Intervention Committee 1999-2001

Site-based Committee 1995-1997

Special Olympic Event Volunteer 1991-2001

Certifications

HB3 Texas Reading Academies English Language Arts Cohort Leader	2019-2021
The Executive Education Academy: A Program offered by Rice Business Executive Education in Collaboration with Leadership Partners	2020
Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS)	2017-Present
Texas ASCD Curriculum Leadership Academy	2016-2017
Curriculum Management Audit Training Level 1 Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA)	2016
Generalist Grades (EC-6)	2015-Present
Dyslexia Intervention Program Specialist	2013
Reading Specialist Grades (EC-12)	2012-Present
English as a Second Language Supplemental	2012-Present
Secondary Generic Special Education	1990-Present
All-Level Physical Education	1990-Present

Professional Membership

Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE)	1991-Present
International Literacy Association (ILA)	2010-Present
Texas Association for Literacy Education (TALE)	2018-Present
Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society/SHSU KDP	2018-Present
Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers (ALER)	2019-Present
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)	2019-Present
The Society for Collegiate Leadership & Achievement	2020